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BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

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THE

EMPIRE OF THE CZAR;

OR,

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS STATE AND PROSPECTS OF RUSSIA,

MADE DURING A JOURNEY THROUGH THAT EMPIRE.

85069

BY

THE MARQUIS DE CUSTINE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

"Respectez surtout les étrangers, de quelque qualité, de quelque rang qu'ils soient; et si vous n'êtes pas à meme de les combler de présents, prodiguez-leur au moins des marques de bienveillance, puisque de la manière dont ils sont traités dans un pays dépend le bien et le mal qu'ils en disent en retournant dans le leur."

Extrait des Conseils de Vladimir Monomaque à ses Enfants en 1126.
Histoire de l'Empire de Russie, par KARAMSIN, t. xi. p. 205.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE

EMPIRE OF THE CZAR.

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THE inflammation of my eye being reduced, I left my prison yesterday, in order to dine at the English club. It is a species of restaurateur, to which there is no admission except through the introduction of a member of the society, which is composed of the most distinguished people in Moscow. The institution is

newly copied from the English, like our *cercles* of Paris.

In the state which the frequency and facility of communication has produced in modern Europe, one is at a loss where to go to find original manners, and habits which may be taken as the true expression of characters. The customs recently adopted by each people are the results of a crowd of borrowed notions. There arises from this digest of all characters in the crucible of universal civilisation, a monotony that is any thing but conducive to the enjoyment of the traveller, although at no other epoch has the taste for travelling been so universal; owing to the great number of people who travel through ennui instead of for instruction. I am not one of those travellers: curious and indefatigable, I discover each day, to my cost, that differences are the rarest things in the world; and that resemblances are the great annoyances of the traveller, whom they oblige to play the part of dupe, a part the most unpleasant to accept, precisely because it is the most easy to perform.

We travel to escape the world in which we have passed our lives, and we find it is impossible to leave it behind. The civilised world has no longer any limits; it is the whole earth. The human race is reuniting, languages are being lost, nations are disappearing, philosophy is reducing creeds to a matter of private belief — last product of a defaced Catholicism, so ordained until it shall shine forth again with renewed brightness, and serve as the future basis of society. Who shall assign limits to this re-assorting of the human race? It is impossible to avoid seeing in it a design of Providence. The malediction of Babel

approaches its prescribed term, and the nations are going to be one, notwithstanding all that has tended to disunite them.

Yesterday I recommenced my travels, by a methodical and minute inspection of the Kremlin, under the conduct of M. ——, to whom I had an introduction. Still the Kremlin! that building is for me all Moscow — all Russia; a world within itself! My footman went in the morning to apprize the keeper, who waited for us. I expected to find an ordinary official, instead of which we were received by a military officer, a polite and intelligent man.

The treasury of the Kremlin is deservedly the pride of Russia. It might serve as a substitute for the chronicles of the country; it is a history in precious stones.

The golden vases, the pieces of armour, the ancient furniture, are not merely to be admired in themselves; every object is associated with some glorious or singular event worthy of commemoration. But before describing, or rather rapidly noticing, the wonders of an arsenal that has not, I believe, its second in Europe, the reader must follow me, step by step, along the way by which I was led to this sanctuary, revered by the Russians, and justly admired by strangers.

After proceeding through several straight but small streets, I arrived in sight of the fortress, when I passed under an archway, before which my footman caused the coach to stop, without deeming it necessary to consult me, so well known is the interest which attaches to the place! The vault forms the

under part of a tower, singular in shape, like all the others in the old quarter of Moscow.

I have not seen Constantinople, but I believe that, next to that city, Moscow is the most striking in appearance of all the capitals in Europe. It is the inland Byzantium. Fortunately, the squares of the old capital are not so immense as those of Petersburg, in which even St. Peter's of Rome would be lost. At Moscow the sites are more confined, and therefore the edifices produce greater effect. The despotism of straight lines and symmetrical plans is opposed here both by nature and history: Moscow is everywhere picturesque. The sky, without being clear, has a silvery brightness: the models, of every species of architecture, are heaped together without order or plan; no structures are perfect, nevertheless the whole strikes, not with admiration, but with astonishment. The inequalities of the surface multiply the points of view. The magic glories of multitudes of cupolas sparkle in the air. Innumerable gilded steeples, in form like minarets, Oriental pavilions, and Indian domes, transport you to Delhi; donjon-keeps and turrets bring you back to Europe in the times of the crusades; the sentinel, mounted on the top of his watch-tower, reminds you of the muezzin inviting the faithful to prayer; while, to complete the confusion of ideas, the cross, which glitters in every direction, commanding the people to prostrate themselves before the Word, seems as though fallen from heaven amid an assembly of Asiatic nations, to point out to them all the narrow way of salvation. It was doubtless before this poetical picture that Madame de Staël exclaimed — *Moscow is the Rome of the North!*

The expression wants justice; for, in no respect can a parallel be drawn between these two cities. It is of Nineveh, Palmyra, or Babylon that we think, when we enter Moscow, and not of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of art in either Pagan or Christian Europe. Nor have the history or religion of this country any nearer connection with Rome. Moscow might have been better compared to Pekin: but Madame de Staël thought of any thing rather than viewing Russia, when she traversed that country to visit Sweden and England, there to carry on the war of genius and of ideas with that enemy of all liberty of thought—Napoleon. She had to deliver herself in a few words of the impressions of a person of superior intellect arrived in a new country. The misfortune of celebrated characters when they travel, is that they are obliged to scatter words behind them; and if they abstain from doing so, other people do it for them.

I place no confidence except in the recitals of unknown travellers. It will be said I am sounding my own trumpet: I do not deny it; for I at least profit by my obscurity, in seeking and endeavouring to discover the truth. The pleasure of rectifying the mistakes and prejudices of some of my friends, and of the few whose minds resemble theirs, will suffice for my glory. My ambition is modest,—for nothing is more easy than to correct the errors of superior characters. It appears to me that if there are any who do not hate despotism as much as I hate it, they will do so, notwithstanding its pomps, after the veracious picture of its works which I offer to their meditation.

The massive tower, at the foot of which my footman made me alight, was picturesquely pierced by

two arches; it separates the walls of the Kremlin, properly so called, from their continuation, which serves as a girdle to Kitaigorod, the city of the merchants, another quarter of old Moscow, founded by the mother of the Czar, John Vassilievitch, in 1534. This date appears to us recent, but it is ancient for Russia, the youngest of the European realms.

The Kitaigorod, a species of suburb to the Kremlin, is an immense bazaar, a town intersected with dark and vaulted alleys, which resemble so many subterranes. These catacombs of the merchants form no cemetries, but a permanent fair. They are a labyrinth of galleries, that rather resemble the arcades of Paris, although less elegant, less light, and more solid. This mode of building is essential to the wants of commerce under the climate: in the north, covered streets remedy, as far as it is possible, the inconveniences and severity of the open air. Sellers and buyers are there sheltered from the storm, the snow, and the frost; whereas light colonnades, open to the day, and airy porticoes have an aspect that is ridiculous. Russian architects ought to take the moles and the ants for their models.

At every step that you take in Moscow you find some chapel highly venerated by the people, and saluted by each passenger. These chapels, or niches, generally contain some image of the Virgin kept under glass, and honoured with a lamp that burns unceasingly. Such shrines are guarded by some old soldier. These veterans are to be met with in the antechambers of the rich, and in the churches, which they keep in order. The life of an old Russian soldier, if he could not obtain an asylum among the

rich, or among the priests, would be one of extreme wretchedness. A charity void of display is unknown to this government: when it wishes to perform an act of benevolence, it builds palaces for the sick, or for children; and the façades of these pious monuments attract all eyes.

In the pillar which separates the double arcade of the tower, is enshrined the Virgin of Vivielski, an ancient image, painted in the Greek style, and highly venerated at Moscow. I observed that every body who passed this chapel — lords, peasants, tradespeople, ladies, and military men,—all bowed and made numerous signs of the cross; many, not satisfied with so humble a homage, stopped, and well-dressed women prostrated themselves to the very earth before the miraculous Virgin, touching even the pavement with their brows; men also, above the rank of peasants, knelt and repeated signs of the cross innumerable. These religious acts in the open street were practised with a careless rapidity which denoted more habit than fervour. My footman is an Italian. Nothing could be more ludicrous than the mixture of conflicting prejudices which are working in the head of this poor foreigner, who has been for a great number of years established in Moscow, his adopted country. His ideas of childhood, brought from Rome, dispose him to believe in the intervention of the saints and the Virgin; and, without losing himself in theological subtilties, he takes for good, in default of better, the miracles of the relics and images of the Greek church. This poor Catholic, converted into a zealous adorer of the Virgin of Vivielski, proves to me the omnipotence of unanimity in creeds. He does

not cease repeating to me, with Italian loquacity, "Signor, creda à me, questa madonna fa dei miracoli, ma dei miracoli veri, veri verissimi, non è come da noi altri; in questo paese tutti gli miracoli sono veri."

This Italian, preserving the ingenuous vivacity and the good temper of the people of his country in the empire of silence and reserve, amuses me.

A gossip in Russia is a phenomenon, a rarity delightful to encounter, a thing that is missed every hour by the traveller, wearied with the tact and prudence of the natives of the country. To lead this man to talk, which is not difficult to accomplish, I risked a few doubts as to the authenticity of the miracles of his Virgin of Vivielski: had I denied the spiritual authority of the Pope, my Roman servant could not have been more shocked. In seeing a poor Catholic endeavouring to prove to me the supernatural power of a Greek painting, I thought that it is no longer theology that separates the two churches. The history of all the Christian nations teaches us that princes have known how, in aid of their political schemes, to avail themselves of the obstinacy, the subtilty, and the logic of the priests, to envenom religious controversies.

In the small square to which the vaulted passage leads, stands a group in bronze, executed in a very bad *soi-disant* classic style. I could have fancied myself in a second-rate sculptor's studio at the Louvre during the Empire. The group represents, under the figure of two Romans, Minine and Pojarski, the liberators of Russia, from which country they drove the Poles at the commencement of the seventeenth

century,—singular heroes to wear the Roman habit! These two individuals are very much in fashion in the present day. Further on I saw before me the extraordinary church of Vassili Blagennoï. The style of that grotesque edifice contrasts in a whimsical manner with the classic statues of the liberators of Moscow. A quantity of bulbous-shaped cupolas, not one of which resembles the other, a dish of fruits, a vase of Delft ware full of pine-apples, all pointed with golden crosses, a colossal crystallization,—such, on a near approach, were the only things to which I could compare the church that had appeared so imposing on my first approach to the city. This building is small, like most other Russian churches; and, notwithstanding the interminable medley of its colours, it does not long interest the observer. Two fine flights of steps lead to the esplanade on which it stands. The interior is confined, paltry, and without character. Its erection cost the life of the architect. It was built, according to Laveau, by the order of Ivan IV., politely surnamed the Terrible. That prince, as a reward to the architect who had greatly embellished Moscow, caused his eyes to be torn out, under the pretext that he did not wish such a *chef-d'œuvre* to be built elsewhere.

On leaving the church we passed under the sacred gate of the Kremlin; and, in accordance with the custom religiously observed by the Russians, I took care to doff my hat before entering the archway, which is not long. The custom is traced back to the time of the last attack of the Calmucs, whom an intervention of the tutelary saints of the empire prevented, they say, from penetrating into the sacred

fortress. The saints are sometimes rather inattentive, but on this day they were on the look-out: the Kremlin was saved; and Russia has continued to acknowledge, by a mark of respect renewed every moment, the remembrance of the divine protection in which she glories. There is in these public manifestations of a religious sentiment, more practical philosophy than in the incredulity of the nations who call themselves the most enlightened on earth; because, after having used and abused the faculties of intelligence, and lost all taste and relish for the true and the simple, they doubt the end of existence, as well as every thing else, and glory in such a state that others may be encouraged to imitate them, as though their perplexity were worthy of envy. These redoubtable sages deprive the nations of the springs of activity, without being able to give any substitute for what they destroy: for a thirst for riches or pleasure inspires man with nothing more than a sensation as passing and feverish as his life is short. It is the temperament and the physical feelings, rather than the light of intellect, which guide the materialists in their wavering march, ever opposed by doubt: for the reason of a man, though he be the first in his country, though a Goëthe himself, has not yet reached a height placed beyond the influence of doubt. Now doubt inclines the heart to tolerance, but it deters it from sacrifice. In the arts, in the sciences, as in politics, sacrifice is the basis of every durable work, of every sublime effort. This, people do not like to own — they accuse Christianity of preaching self-denial: — to act thus is to blame virtue. The priests of Jesus Christ open to the multitude a road which was once

only known and trodden by the higher orders of human intelligence.

I must not stay to again describe the wonderful aspect of the exterior of the Kremlin—its prodigious walls and towers, carried over hills and ravines, and rising above each other in every variety of style, shape, and design, forming altogether the most original and poetical architecture in the world. But how shall I describe my surprise when, on entering the interior of the enchanted city, I approached the building called the Treasury, and saw before me a little modern palace, with straight lines and sharp angles, ornamented in front by Corinthian pillars. This cold and puny imitation of the antique, for which I ought to have been prepared, appeared to me so ridiculous, that I stepped back some paces and asked my companion permission to delay our visit to the Treasury, under pretext of first admiring some churches. After having been so long in Russia, I ought to be surprised at no incoherence in the inventions of the Imperial architects; but this time, the discordance was so glaring, that it struck me as quite a novelty.

We therefore commenced our survey by a visit to the Cathedral of the Assumption. This church possesses one of those innumerable paintings of the Virgin Mary that good Christians, of all lands, attribute to St. Luke. The edifice reminds me rather of the Saxon and the Norman than of our Gothic churches. It is the work of an Italian architect of the fifteenth century. After the structure had sunk and fallen in several times, while being erected by the bad artificers and worse architects of the land, foreign aid

was sought, which succeeded in making the work solid; but, in its ornaments, the taste of the country has been followed.

I am ignorant of the rule prescribed by the Greek church relative to the worship of images: but in seeing this church entirely covered with paintings in fresco, betraying bad taste, and designed in the stiff, monotonous style, called the modern Greek, because its models were brought from Byzantium, I asked myself, what then are the figures, what can be the subjects, the representation of which is forbidden in the Greek church? Apparently they banish nothing from these buildings except good pictures.

In passing before the Virgin of St. Luke, my Italian cicerone assured me that it was genuine: he added, with the faith of a magic, "Signore, signore, è il paese dei miracoli!" "It is the land of miracles!" I believe him, for fear is a potent thaumaturgist. What a singular journey is this, which in a fortnight conveys you into Europe as it was 400 years ago! Nay, with us, even in the middle ages, man better felt his dignity than he does at the present day in Russia. Princes as false and crafty as the heroes of the Kremlin would never have been surnamed *great* in western Europe.

The ichonostasis of this cathedral is magnificently painted and gilded from the pavement to the roof. The ichonostasis is a partition, or panel, raised in Greek churches between the sanctuary, which is always concealed by doors, and the nave, where the faithful congregate. The church is nearly square, very lofty, and so small that in walking in it you feel as if in a dungeon. The building contains the

tombs of numerous patriarchs; it has also very rich shrines and famous relics brought from Asia. Viewed in detail, the cathedral is any thing but beautiful, yet, as a whole, there is something about it which is imposing. If we do not admire, we feel a sense of sadness; and this is something: for sadness disposes the mind to religious sentiments. But in the great structures of the Catholic church there is something more than Christian sadness; there is the song of triumph and victorious faith.

The sacristy contains many curiosities; but I do not pretend to give a list of the wonders of Moscow. I speak of every thing that strikes me, and for more complete accounts refer the reader to Laveau, Schnitzler, and, above all, to my successors. Fresh travellers cannot fail soon to explore Russia; for this country will not long remain so little known as it is at present.

The steeple of John the Great, Ivan Velikoï, is contained within the walls of the Kremlin. It is the loftiest building in the city; its cupola, according to Russian custom, is gilded with the gold of ducats. This singular tower is an object of veneration to the Muscovite peasants. Every thing is holy at Moscow, so strong is the sentiment of respect in the heart of the Russian people.

The church of Spassna Borou (the Saviour in the Garden), the most ancient in Moscow, was also shown to me; and near to it a bell, a piece of which is broken off, the largest bell, I believe, in the world. It is placed on the ground, and is in itself a cupola. It was re-cast after a fire which had caused it to fall, in the reign of the Empress Anne.

We likewise visited two convents within the

Kremlin, those of the Miracles and the Ascension, in which latter are the tombs of several Czarinas; among others that of Helena, the mother of Ivan the Terrible. She was worthy of her son: unmerciful like him, talent was her only recommendation. Some of the wives of the same tyrant are also buried here. The churches of the Convent of the Ascension astonish foreigners by their riches.

At last I summoned courage to face the Corinthian columns of the Treasury; so braving with closed eyes those dragons of bad taste, I entered the glorious arsenal, where are ranged, as in a cabinet of curiosities, the most interesting historical relics of Russia.

What a collection of armour, of vases, and of national jewels! What profusion of crowns and of thrones, all gathered into the same place! The manner in which they are arranged adds to the effect. It is impossible not to admire the good taste as well as the political wisdom which has presided over the disposition of so many insignia and trophies. The display may be a little boastful, but patriotic pride is the most legitimate of any. We forgive a passion which aids us in fulfilling our duties. There is here a profound idea, of which the things are but symbols.

The crowns are placed on cushions raised upon pedestals, and the thrones, ranged along the wall, are reared in separate alcoves. There is wanting only in this evocation of the past, the presence of the men for whom all these things were made. Their absence is equivalent to a sermon on the vanity of human life. The Kremlin without its Czars is like a theatre without lights or actors.

The most respect-worthy, if not the most imposing

of the crowns, is that of Monomachus; it was brought from Byzantium to Kiew in 1116. Another crown is also said to have belonged to Monomachus, though many consider it yet more ancient than the reign of that prince. In this royal constellation of diadems, are crowns also of the kingdoms of Kazan, Astrachan, and Georgia. The view of these satellites of royalty, maintaining a respectful distance from the star that governs all — the imperial crown — is singularly imposing. Every thing is emblematic in Russia: it is a poetical land — poetical as sorrow! What are more eloquent than the tears that fall internally and gather upon the heart? The crown of Siberia is found among the rest. It is an imaginary insignia of Russian manufacture, deposited as though to point out a grand historical fact, accomplished by commercial adventurers and soldiers under the reign of Ivan IV., an epoch from whence dates, not exactly the discovery, but the conquest of Siberia. All these crowns are covered with the most enormous and the most costly jewels in the world. The bowels of this land of desolation have been opened to furnish a food for the pride of that despotism of which it is the asylum!

The throne and crown of Poland help to enrich the superb imperial and royal galaxy. So many jewels, enclosed in a small space, blazed in my eyes like the train of a peacock. What sanguinary vanity! I muttered to myself, at each new marvel before which my guides forced me to stop.

The crowns of Peter I., of Catherine I., and of Elizabeth, particularly struck me: — what gold! — what diamonds! — and what dust!! Imperial orbs, thrones, and sceptres — all brought together to attest the gran-

deur of things, the nothingness of men! And when we think that this nothingness extends even to empires, we are at a loss to which of the branches to cling that hang over the torrent of time. How can we attach ourselves to a world made up of the forms of life, but where no forms last? If God had not revealed a paradise, it would be found by souls of a mould and temper strong enough to fill this void in creation. The platonic idea of an unchangeable and purely spiritual world—ideal type of all the universe—is equivalent in my eyes to the existence of such a world. How can we believe that God is less fertile in conception, less rich, less powerful, and less equitable than the brain of man? Can our imagination surpass the works of the Creator, from whom that imagination is derived? The idea implies contradiction and impossibility. It has been said that it is man who creates God in his image: yes, as a child makes war with wooden soldiers; but does not his game furnish a proof to history? Without Turenne, Frederick II., or Napoleon having lived, would our children amuse themselves by imitating battles?

Vases chased in the style of Benvenuto Cellini, cups enriched with jewels, arms and armour, precious stuffs, rich embroideries, costly crystal ware of all lands and all ages, abound in this wonderful collection, of which a real curioso would not complete the inventory in a week. Besides the thrones of all the Russian princes of every age, I was shown the caparisons of their horses, their dress, their furniture; and these various things perfectly dazzled my eyes. The palace in the Arabian Nights is the only picture I can suggest that will give an idea of this marvellous,

if not enchanted abode. But here, the interest of history adds to the effect of the magnificence. How many curious events are picturesquely registered and attested by the venerable relics! From the finely-worked helmet of Saint Alexander Newski to the litter which carried Charles XII. at Pultawa, each object recalls an interesting recollection, or a singular fact. The Treasury is the true album of the giants of the Kremlin.

In concluding my survey of these proud spoils of time, I recollected, as by inspiration, a passage from Montaigne—without whose works I never travel—which will serve to complete, by a curious contrast, the description of the Muscovite treasury:

"The Duke of Muscovy owed anciently this homage to the Tartars. When they sent to him ambassadors, he came to meet them on foot, and presented them with a goblet of mare's milk (a beverage which they esteem as the greatest luxury); and if, in drinking, any drops fell on the mane of their horses, he was bound to lick them up with his tongue.

"In Russia, the army that the Emperor Bajazet sent there was overwhelmed with so tremendous a storm of snow, that, to save themselves from the cold, many killed and disembowelled their horses, in order to creep within them and enjoy the vital heat."

I quote this last fact, because it reminds me of the admirable and fearful description which M. de Ségur gives of the battle-field of Moskowa, in his *History of the Campaign in Russia.*

The Emperor of all the Russias, with all his thrones and all his haughty splendours, is no other than the successor of these selfsame grand-dukes whom we

see thus humiliated in the sixteenth century; nor has his family's right to succeed even them been undisputed: for, without speaking of the election of the Troubetzkoï, annulled by the intrigues of the Romanows and their friends, the crimes of several generations of princes could alone place the children of Catherine II. on the throne. It is not, therefore, without motive that the history of Russia is concealed from the Russians, and that it is wished to be concealed from the world. Assuredly, the rigidity of political principles in a prince seated upon a throne thus founded, is not one of the least singular features in the history of our times.

At the epoch when the grand-dukes of Moscow wore the degrading yoke of the Mongols, the spirit of chivalry flourished in Europe, especially in Spain, where the blood flowed in torrents for the honour and independence of Christianity. I do not believe, notwithstanding the barbarism of the middle ages, a single monarch could have been found in western Europe capable of disgracing monarchy, by consenting to reign on the conditions imposed on the grand-dukes of Muscovy, during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, by their Tartar masters. Better to lose the crown than to lower the majesty of royalty. Such would have been the words of a French or Spanish prince, or any other king of ancient Europe. But in Russia, glory, like every thing else, is of recent date.

On the ground-floor of the palace of the Treasury, I was shown the state-coaches of the emperors and empresses of Russia. The old coach of the last patriarch is also included in the collection. Several

of its windows are of horn. It is not among the least curious of the relics in the historical repository of the Kremlin.

I was afterwards shown the little palace, which the Emperor inhabits when he visits the Kremlin. There is nothing in it worthy of notice, unless it be the picture of the last election of a king of Poland. That extraordinary diet which placed Poniatowski on the throne, and Poland under the yoke, has been curiously represented by a French painter, whose name I could not learn.

Other wonders awaited me elsewhere. I visited the senate-house, the Imperial palaces, and the ancient palace of the patriarch, which possess little interest beyond their names; and, finally, the little angular palace, which is a jewel and a plaything. It gives the idea of a masterpiece of moresque architecture, shining by its elegance in the midst of the heavy masses which surround it. It may be compared to a carbuncle set in common freestone. The structure consists of several stories, of which the lower ones are more spacious than those they support; this multiplies the terraces, and gives to the edifice a pyramidal form, the effect of which is very picturesque. Each story rises behind the one on which it stands, and the topmost of all is nothing more than a little pavilion. On each of these stories, squares of Delft ware, polished after the manner of the Saracens, indicate the lines of architecture with much taste and precision. The interior has just been refurnished, glazed, coloured, and generally restored, in a manner that shows good taste.

To describe the contrast produced by so many edi-

fices of various styles, all crowded together in one spot, which forms the centre of an immense city, to convey an idea of the effect produced by the congregation of Arabesque palaces, Gothic forts, Greek temples, Indian steeples, Chinese pavilions, all confusedly mingled within a circle of Cyclopian walls, would be utterly impossible. Words cannot paint objects, except by the recollections which they recall; and the recollections of no one who has not seen the Kremlin can serve to picture it.

The lowest story of the little Moorish palace is almost entirely occupied by one enormous vaulted hall, supported on a single pillar, which rises from the centre. This is the hall of the throne; the emperors repair to it on leaving the church, after their coronation. Every thing there revives the recollection of the magnificence of the ancient Czars, and the imagination goes back to the reigns of the Ivans and Alexis's. The appearance is truly Muscovite. The entirely new paintings, which cover the walls of this palace, struck me as being executed with taste: the *tout ensemble* reminds me of the pictures I have seen of the porcelain tower at Pekin.

The group of these varied monuments gives to the Kremlin an aspect of theatrical decoration that is seen nowhere else in the world: but not one of the buildings in that Russian forum will bear a separate examination any better than those dispersed throughout the rest of the city. At the first view, Moscow produces a very powerful impression: to a bearer of despatches, travelling quickly past its walls, it would, with its churches, convents, palaces, and strong castles, any of which might be taken for the abode

of unearthly beings, appear the most beautiful of cities.

Unfortunately they are now building at the Kremlin a new palace for the Emperor. Have they considered whether this sacrilegious improvement will not spoil the general aspect, unique as it is in the world, of the ancient edifices of the holy fortress? The present habitation of the sovereign is, I admit, mean in appearance; but, to remedy the inconvenience, they are intrenching upon the most venerable portions of the old national sanctuary. This is profanation. Were I the Emperor, I would rather raise my new palace in the air, than disturb one stone of the old ramparts of the Kremlin.

One day at Petersburg, in speaking to me of these works, the monarch said that they would beautify Moscow. I doubt it, was the answer of my thoughts: you talk as if you could ornament history. I know that the architecture of the old fortress does not conform to any rules of art: but it is the expression of the manners, acts, and ideas of a people and of an age that the world will never see again; it is, therefore, sacred as the irrevocable past. The seal of a power superior to man is there impressed — the power of time. But in Russia, authority spares nothing. The Emperor, who, I believe, saw in my face an expression of regret, left me, assuring me that his new palace would be much larger and better adapted to the wants of his court than the old one. Such a reason would suffice to answer any objection in a country like this in which I travel.

In order that the court may be better lodged, they are going to include within the new palace, the little

church of the Saviour in the Garden. That venerable sanctuary, the most ancient, I believe, in the Kremlin and in Moscow, is then to disappear among the fine white walls, with which they will surround it, to the great regret of all lovers of antiquity and of the picturesque.

What more provokes me is the mockery of respect with which the profanation is to be committed. They boast that the old monument will still be preserved; in other words, it will not be destroyed, but only buried alive in a palace. Such is the way in which they here conciliate the official veneration for the past with the passion for "comfort," newly imported from England. This manner of beautifying the national city of the Russians is altogether worthy of Peter the Great. Was it not sufficient that the founder of the new city should abandon the old one? No!—his successors must also demolish it, under the pretext of adorning it.

The Emperor Nicholas might have acquired a glory of his own, instead of crawling along the road laid out by another. He had only to leave the Petersburg winter-palace when it had been burnt for him, and to return and fix the imperial residence in the Kremlin as it stands; building for the wants of his household and for the great fêtes of the court, as many palaces, beyond the sacred walls, as he might think fit. By this return he would have repaired the fault of Peter the Great; who, instead of dragging his boyards into the theatre which he built for them on the Baltic, ought to have been able to civilise them in their own homes, by availing himself of the admirable elements which nature had placed within their reach and at his

disposal — elements which he slighted with a contempt and with a superficiality of mind unworthy of a superior man, as, in certain respects, he was. At each step that the stranger takes on the road from Petersburg to Moscow, Russia, with its illimitable territory, its immense agricultural resources, expands and enlarges on the mind in a measure equal to that in which Peter the Great diminished and contracted it. Monomachus, in the eleventh century, was a truly Russian prince; Peter I., in the eighteenth, was, in his false method of improving, nothing more than a tributary of foreigners, an imitator of the Dutch, a mimicker of civilisation, which he copied with the minuteness of a savage.

If I were ever to see the throne of Russia majestically replaced upon its true basis, in the centre of the empire, at Moscow; if St. Petersburg, its stuccoes and gilt work, left to crumble in the marsh whereon it is reared, were to become only what it should have always been, a simple naval port, built of granite, a magnificent entrepôt of commerce between Russia and the West, as, on the other side, Kazan and Nijni serve as steps between Russia and the East; I should say that the Slavonian nation, triumphing by a just pride over the vanity of its leaders, sees at length its proper course, and deserves to attain the object of its ambition. Constantinople waits for it; there arts and riches will naturally flow, in recompense of the efforts of a people, called to be so much the more great and glorious as they have been long obscure and resigned.

Let the mind picture to itself the grandeur of a capital seated in the centre of a plain many thousands of leagues in extent — a plain which stretches

from Persia to Lapland, from Astrachan and the Caspian to the Uralian Mountains and the White Sea, with its port of Archangel; from thence, bordering the Baltic, where stand Petersburg and Kronstadt, the two arsenals of Moscow, it sweeps to the Vistula in the west, and from thence again to the Bosphorus, where conquest awaits the coming of the Russians, where Constantinople will serve as another portal of communication between Moscow, the holy city of the Muscovites, and the world.

The Emperor Nicholas, notwithstanding his practical sense and his profound sagacity, has not discerned the best means of accomplishing such an end. He comes now and then to promenade in the Kremlin; but this is not sufficient. He ought to have recognised the necessity of permanently fixing himself there: if he has recognised it, he has not had the energy to make such a sacrifice, — this is his error. Under Alexander, the Russians burnt Moscow to save the Empire: under Nicholas, God burnt the palace of Petersburg to advance the destinies of Russia; but Nicholas does not answer to the call of Providence. Russia still waits!—Instead of rooting himself like a cedar in the only fitting soil, he disturbs and upturns that soil to build stables and a palace, in which he may be more conveniently lodged during his journeys; and with this contemptible object in view, he forgets that every stone of the national fortress is, or ought to be, an object of veneration for all true Muscovites. It is not wise in him — a sovereign whose authority depends upon the superstitious sentiments of his people — to shake, by a sacrilege, the respect of the Muscovites for the only truly

national monument which they possess. The Kremlin is the work of the Russian genius; but that irregular, picturesque marvel is at length condemned to pass under the yoke of modern art: it is the taste of Catherine II., which still reigns in Russia.

That woman, who, notwithstanding the grasp of her mind, knew nothing of the arts or of poetry, not content with having covered the empire with shapeless monuments copied from the models of antiquity, left behind her a plan for rendering the façade of the Kremlin more regular; and here behold her grandson, in part executing the monstrous project: flat white surfaces, stiff lines, and right angles replace the recesses and projections, the slopes and terraces, where lights and shadows formerly played; where the eye was agreeably bewildered, and the imagination excited by external staircases, walls encrusted with coloured arabesques, and palaces of painted Delft ware. Let them be demolished, let them be concealed;—are they not going to be replaced by smooth white walls, well-squared windows, and ceremonious portals? No! Peter the Great is not dead: the Asiatics whom he enrolled and drilled, travellers and imitators, like him, of the Europe which, while continuing to copy, they affect to disdain, pursue their work of barbarism, miscalled civilisation, deceived by the maxims of a master who adopted uniformity for his motto, and the uniform for his standard.

There are, then, neither artists nor architects in Russia: all who preserve any sentiment of the beautiful ought to throw themselves at the feet of the emperor, and implore him to spare his Kremlin.

What the enemy could not do, the emperor is accomplishing. He is destroying the holy ramparts of which the miners of Buonaparte could scarcely disturb a stone.

And I, who am come to the Kremlin to see this historical wonder thus spoiled, dare not raise one cry against the perpetration of the impious work — dare not make one appeal, in the name of history, the arts, and good taste, in favour of these old monuments condemned to make room for the abortive conceptions of modern architecture. I protest, but it is very secretly, against this wrong inflicted upon a nation, upon history and good taste; and if a few of the most intelligent and informed of the men I meet here dare to listen to me, all the answer that they venture to give is, that "the emperor wishes his new residence to be more *suitable* than the old one: of what, then, do you complain?" (*suitable** is the sacramental word of Russian despotism.) "He has commanded that it should be rebuilt on the very spot, even, where stood the palace of his ancestors: he will have changed nothing."

I am, being a stranger, prudent, and answer nothing to such reasoning: but were I a Russian, I would defend, stone by stone, the ancient walls and enchanted towers of the fortress of the Ivans; I would almost prefer the dungeon under the Neva, or exile, to the shame of remaining a mute accomplice in this imperial vandalism. The martyr of good taste might yet obtain an honourable place below the martyr of faith: the arts are a religion, — a religion which, in

* convenable.

our days, is not the least powerful, nor the least revered.

The view obtained from the height of the terrace of the Kremlin is magnificent, more especially at evening. I shall often return to view the setting sun from the foot of the steeple of John the Great, the loftiest, I believe, in Moscow.

The plantations with which for some years past the fortress has been nearly surrounded, form an ornament characterised by much good taste. They beautify the modern merchant-city, and at the same time form a fringe for the Alcazar of the old Russians. The trees also add to the picturesque effect of the ancient ramparts. There are vast spaces in the thickness of the walls of this castle of romance, where are seen staircases, the boldness and height of which make one dizzy. The eye of fancy may discern there an entire population of the dead, descending with gentle steps, wandering over the platforms, or leaning on the balustrades of the old towers; from whence they cast upon the world the cold, disdainful eye of death. The more I contemplate these irregular masses, infinite in the variety of their forms, the more I admire the Biblical architecture and the poetical inhabitants.

In the midst of the promenade which surrounds the ramparts, there is an archway which I have already noticed, but which continues to astonish me each time I see it. You leave a city, the surface of whose soil is very uneven, a city all studded with towers rising to the clouds, and plunge into a dark covered way, in which you ascend a long steep hill; on arriving at its summit, you again find yourself under the open heaven, where you look down upon

another part of the city, hitherto unseen, which stretches to the border of a river, half dried up by the summer heats: this river is the Moskowa. When the last rays of the sun are about to withdraw, the water in its bed may be seen coloured with the tint of fire. This natural mirror, embosomed amid graceful hills, is very striking. Many of the distant buildings on those hills, especially the Hospital for Foundlings, are large as a city: they consist of benevolent institutions, schools, and religious foundations. The Moskowa, with its stone bridge, the convents, with their innumerable metal domes, which represent above the holy city the colossal images of priests unceasingly at prayer, the softened peal of the bells, whose sound is peculiarly harmonious in this land, the gentle murmur and motion of a calm, yet numerous crowd, continually animated, but never agitated by the silent and rapid transit of horses and carriages, the number of which is as great at Moscow as at Petersburgh, — all these things will give an idea of the effect of a setting sun in this old capital. Every summer evening they make Moscow unlike any other city in the world: it is neither Europe nor Asia; it is Russia — and it is Russia's heart. Beyond the undulations of the city, above its illumined roofs and gilded dust, may be seen the Bird Mountain. It was from the summit of that hill that our soldiers first beheld Moscow. What a recollection for a Frenchman!

In surveying with the eye all the quarters of this large city, I sought in vain for some traces of the fire which awoke Europe and dethroned Buonaparte. Conqueror and commander when he entered Mos-

cow, he left the holy city of the Russians a fugitive, thenceforward condemned to mistrust Fortune, whose inconstancy he once imagined he had vanquished.

The words cited by the Abbé de Pradt fill up, it appears to me, the measure of cruelty that may enter into the inordinate ambition of a soldier. "There is but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous," cried the hero, when at Warsaw, and without an army. And why did he say this? In that solemn moment he thought only of the figure that he was going to make in the article of a newspaper! The corpses of the men who perished for him were surely anything but ridiculous! The colossal vanity of the Emperor Napoleon could only be struck by the jeers with which some might hail a disaster, that will nevertheless make the nations tremble for ages, and the simple recollection of which has, for thirty years, made war impossible to Europe. To be occupied with self in so solemn a moment was to make vanity criminal. The sentence quoted by the Archbishop of Malines is the heart-cry of an egotist, who for one hour was master of the world, but could never be master of himself. That trait of inhumanity, displayed at such a moment, will be noted by history when it shall have had time to become equitable.

I could have wished to summon before me the imagery and decoration of this epic scene, this most astonishing event of modern times; but all here strive to bury great and stirring deeds in oblivion. A nation of slaves dreads its own heroism; the people, naturally and necessarily discreet, seek only for the shelter of insignificance. I have not met one

person who was willing to answer my questions on the trait of patriotic devotion that is most glorious in the history of Russia.

In speaking to strangers of that event, I do not feel my national pride humiliated. When I think of the cost at which this people recovered its independence, I am proud, even though seated on the ashes of our soldiers. The defence proves the daring of the attack: history will say that the one was equally great with the other; but, as her truth is incorruptible, she will add, that the defence was the most just. It is for Napoleon to answer to this. France was at that time in the hands of a single man: she acted, but she no longer thought; she was drunk with glory, as the Russians are with obedience: it is those who think for an entire people who are responsible for events.

Rostopchin, after having passed years at Paris, where he had even established his family, took a fancy to return to his own country. But dreading the patriotic glory which, rightly or wrongly, attached to his name, he caused his appearance before the Emperor Alexander to be preceded by a pamphlet, published purely with the view of proving that the fire of Moscow was accidental, and not the result of a concerted plan. Thus, Rostopchin used every endeavour to clear himself in Russia from the heroism of which he was accused by Europe, — astonished at the greatness, and, after his pamphlet, at the wretchedness of this man, born to serve a better government. Concealing and denying his glorious deed, he bitterly complained of the new species of calumny by which they endeavoured to make of an

obscure general, a liberator of his country! The Emperor Alexander, on his part, never ceased to repeat, that he had not given any order for the burning of his capital.

This contest of mediocrity is characteristic. We can never cease to wonder at the sublimity of the drama, when we think of the actors by whom it was played. Never have performers given themselves greater trouble to persuade the spectators that they knew nothing of their parts.

In reading Rostopchin, I took him at his word; for I said to myself — a man who is so afraid of seeming great, cannot be great. In a case like this, we must believe people literally: false modesty is sincere in spite of itself; it is a brevet of littleness; for men really superior affect nothing; they do justice to themselves in their own minds; and when forced to speak of themselves openly, they do so, without pride, but also without pretended humility. It is long since I read this singular pamphlet, but I have never forgotten it, for it impressed me at the time with the spirit of the Russian government and people.

It was already night before I left the Kremlin. The colours of the enormous edifices of Moscow, and of the distant hills, were softly sobered; the silence of night descended upon the city. The windings of the Moskowa were no longer traced in brilliant lines, the flames of western day were extinguished; but the grandeur of the spot, and all the memories which it awoke, still stirred within my heart. I fancied I saw the shade of Ivan IV. — Ivan the Terrible — standing upon the loftiest tower of his

deserted palace, and, aided by his sister and his friend, Elizabeth of England, endeavouring to overwhelm Napoleon in a sea of blood! These phantoms seemed to glory in the fall of the giant, who, by an award of fate, was destined, in falling, to leave his two enemies more powerful than he had found them.

England and Russia have cause to return thanks to Buonaparte—nor do they refuse to do so. Such was not for France the result of the reign of Louis XIV. The hatred of Europe has survived, during the period of a century and a half, the death of the Great King, whilst the Great Captain has been deified since his fall: and even his gaolers do not fear to unite their discordant voices with the concert of praises which resounds from all parts of Europe,—an historical phenomenon, which I think stands alone in the annals of the world, and which can only be explained by the spirit of opposition that now reigns among all the civilised nations. The reign, however, of that spirit is drawing to its close. We may, therefore, hope soon to read works in which Buonaparte shall be estimated by his own intrinsic merits or demerits, and without malignant allusions to the reigning power in France or elsewhere.

I hope to see the day in which this man—as wonderful by the passions he foments after death as by the actions of his life—will be fairly judged. Truth has but yet touched the pedestal of his statue, hitherto shielded against the equitable severity of history by the double influence of unparalleled successes and misfortunes.

At any rate our children will have to learn, that

he had more grasp of mind than dignity of character, and that he was greater by his talent in availing himself of successes, than by his constancy in struggling against reverses. Then, but not till then, will the terrible consequences of his political immorality, and his machiavelian government, be mitigated.

After leaving the terraces of the Kremlin, I returned to my rooms with a feeling of exhaustion similar to that of a man who has been just witnessing the performance of some horrible tragedy, or rather like an invalid who awakes with the nightmare in a fever.

CHAP. XXVIII.

ORIENTAL ASPECT OF MOSCOW. — HORACE VERNET. — WANT OF SUPERIOR WORKS OF ART. — RUSSIAN FICKLENESS. — SILK MANUFACTORIES. — APPEARANCES OF LIBERTY. — RAILROADS. — ENGLISH CLUB. — RUSSIAN PIETY. — CHURCH AND STATE IN ENGLAND. — DEVOTEES AND STATESMEN. — ERROR OF THE LIBERALS IN REJECTING CATHOLICISM. — FRENCH POLICY. — NEWSPAPER GOVERNMENT. — THE GRECO-RUSSIAN CHURCH. — ITS SECTS, AND THEIR ORIGIN. — POLYGAMY. — MERCHANTS OF MOSCOW. — A RUSSIAN FAIR. — RURAL SCENERY IN MOSCOW. — DRUNKENNESS AMONG THE RUSSIANS. — HIDDEN POETRY. — SONG OF THE DON COSSACKS. — THE MUSIC OF NORTHERN NATIONS. — THE COSSACKS. — THEIR CHARACTER. — INFLUENCE UNDER WHICH THEY FIGHT. — POLITICAL SUBTERFUGES. — A POLISH FABLE.

Moscow is about the only mountainous district in the centre of Russia. Not that this word is to suggest the idea of Switzerland or Italy: the soil is full of inequalities, and that is all. But the contrast presented by these hills, rising in the middle of an expanse, where both the eye and the thoughts lose themselves as on the savannahs of America or the steppes of Asia, produces an effect that is very striking. Moscow is the city of panoramas. With its commanding sites and its grotesque edifices, which might serve as models for the fantastic compositions of Martin, it recalls the idea which we form, without knowing why, of Persepolis, Bagdad, Babylon, or Palmyra,—romantic capitals of fabulous lands, whose history is a poem, and whose architecture is a dream.

In a word, at Moscow we forget Europe. This was what I did not know in France, although I had read nearly all the travellers' descriptions of the city. They have then failed in their duty. There is one especially whom I cannot pardon for not having permitted others to enjoy his visit to Russia. No descriptions are equal to the sketches of a painter, exact and, at the same time, picturesque, like Horace Vernet. What man was ever more gifted to perceive, and to make others perceive, the spirit that breathes in things? The truth of painting lies not so much in the form as in the expression of objects: he understood them like a poet, and transferred them like an artist; consequently, every time I feel the insufficiency of my words, I am inclined to be angry with Horace Vernet.

Here, every view is a landscape. If art has done little for Moscow, the caprice of the builders and the force of circumstances have created marvels. The extraordinary forms of the edifices, and the grandeur of the masses, strongly impress the imagination. The enjoyment, it must be owned, is of an inferior order: Moscow is not the product of genius; connoisseurs will there find no monuments of art worthy of a minute examination: those monuments are rather the strange and deserted habitations of some race of giants; they are the works of the cyclops. In a city where no great artist has left the impress of his thoughts we may feel astonishment, but nothing more, and astonishment is soon exhausted. However, there is nothing here, not even the disenchantment that follows the first surprise, from which I cannot draw a lesson: more particularly am I struck with

the visible intimate connection between the aspect of the city and the character of the people. The Russians love all that dazzles; they are easily seduced by appearances: to excite envy, no matter at what price, contitutes their happiness. The English are gnawed by pride, the Russians are corroded by vanity.

I feel the necessity of here reminding the reader that generalities always pass for injustices. Once for all, I would state that my observations never exclude exceptions; and I avail myself of the occasion to express the respect and admiration I entertain for the merits and agreeable qualities of individuals to whom my criticisms do not apply.

Other travellers have observed before I did, that the less we know of a Russian the more amiable we find him. The Russians have retorted upon those travellers, that they spoke in their own disparagement, and that the coolness of which they complained only proved their want of merit. "We gave you a good reception," they add, "because we are naturally hospitable; and if we afterwards changed in our manner towards you, it was because we thought more highly of you at first than you deserved." Such an answer was made a considerable time ago to a French traveller, an able writer, but whose position obliged him to be excessively reserved. I do not mean here to cite either his name or his book. The few truths which, in his prudent recitals, he allowed himself to expose, placed him in a very disagreeable position. This was the penalty for denying himself the exercise of his intellect, in order to submit to expectations which can never be satisfied; not any more by flattering them than by doing them justice. It would cost less

to brave them; and on this opinion the reader will perceive I act.

Moscow prides herself on the progress of her manufactures. The Russian silks here contend with those of both East and West. The merchant-quarter, the Kitaigorod, as well as the street called the Bridge of the Marshals, where the most elegant shops are found, are reckoned among the curiosities of the city. If I mention them it is because I think that the efforts of the Russians to free themselves from the tribute which they pay to the industry of other nations, may produce important political consequences in Europe. The liberty that reigns in Moscow is illusive; yet it cannot be denied that in its streets there are men who appear to move spontaneously, who think and act under an impulse of their own. Moscow is in this respect very different from Petersburg. Among the causes of the difference, I place in the first rank the vast extent and the varied surface of the territory in the midst of which it stands. Space and inequality (I here take this word in all its acceptations) are the elements of liberty; for absolute equality is the synonyme of tyranny, though it is the minority who may be placed under the yoke: liberty and equality exclude each other by means of reserves and combinations, more or less abstruse, which neutralise the effect of things while preserving their names.

Moscow remains almost buried in the midst of a country of which it is the capital: hence the seal of originality impressed upon its buildings, the air of liberty which distinguishes its inhabitants, and the little inclination of the Czars for a residence whose

aspect is so independent. The Czars, ancient tyrants mitigated by the fashion which has metamorphosed them into emperors, and even into amiable men, fly Moscow. They prefer Petersburg, with all its inconveniences, for they wish to be in continual communication with the West of Europe. Russia, as formed by Peter the Great, does not trust to herself to live and to learn. At Moscow they could not obtain in a week's time the little importations of the current anecdotes and small gossip of Paris, nor the ephemeral literature of Europe. These details, contemptible as they appear to us, furnish the chief excitement of the Russian court, and consequently of Russia.

If the freezing or the melting snow did not render railroads useless in this land during six or eight months of the year, we should see the Russian government surpass all others in the construction of those roads which are, as it were, lessening the size of earth; for that government suffers more than any other from the inconveniences of distance. But, notwithstanding acceleration of the speed of travelling, a vast extent of territory will always be the chief obstacle to the circulation of ideas: for the soil will not allow itself, like the sea, to be crossed in all directions. The water, which, at first sight, appears destined to separate the inhabitants of the world, is the medium which, in reality, unites them. Wonderful problem! Man, the prisoner of God, is yet allowed to be the king of nature.

Certainly, were Moscow a sea-port, or the centre of a vast network of those metal wheel-tracks, those electric conductors of human thought, destined to

satisfy, in some respects, the impatient spirit of our age, we should not see what I saw yesterday at the English club-house — military men, and fashionables of all ages, serious persons and giddy youths, making the sign of the cross, and remaining silent for some moments before sitting down at table — not a family-table, but a *table-d'hôte*. Those who disclaim all religion (and there is a considerable number of such) viewed the others without any surprise. It may still be seen that there are 800 good leagues between Paris and Moscow.

The palace belonging to the club is large and handsome. The entire establishment is well planned and skilfully directed; everything is about the same as in the clubs of other places. This did not surprise me; but the pious feeling of the Russians I sincerely admired, and said as much to the person who had introduced me.

We were talking together after dinner in the garden of the club.

"We must not be judged by the appearance," replied my companion, who is, as I am about to show, one of the most enlightened of the Russians.

"It is precisely this appearance," I replied, "which inspires me with esteem for your nation. With us, people dread only hypocrisy; but the sneer of cynicism is even yet more injurious to society."

"Yes, but it is less revolting to noble minds."

"I think so too: but by what strange whim is it that incredulity should raise so great a cry of sacrilege whenever she thinks she sees in a man's heart a little less piety than he proclaims by his words and actions? Were our philosophers consistent, they

would tolerate hypocrisy, as one of the stays of the machine of state. Faith is more tolerant."

"I did not expect to hear you make an apology for hypocrisy!"

"I detest it as the most odious of all vices: but I say that, injuring man only in his relations with God, hypocrisy is less pernicious to society than barefaced incredulity; and I maintain that it is only truly pious people who have any right to qualify it with the name of profanation. Irreligious minds, philosophical statesmen, ought to view it with indulgence, and might even use it as a political auxiliary. This, however, has not often happened in France; for Gallic sincerity revolts from drawing advantages out of falsehood, in order to govern men: but the calculating genius of a rival nation has known better than we have how to make use of the yoke of convenient fictions. The policy of England — a country which excels all others in the practical character of its views and aims—has liberally rewarded theological inconsistency and religious hypocrisy. The church of England is certainly much less reformed than is the Catholic church, since the Council of Trent has done justice to the legitimate claims of princes and people: it is absurd to destroy unity under the pretext of abuses, and at the same time to perpetuate those abuses for the abolition of which the fatal right of making sects has been arrogated; nevertheless, the English church, founded upon patented contradictions, and maintained by usurpation, still continues to aid the country in prosecuting the conquest of the world; and the country recompenses it by a hypocritical protection. I therefore maintain, that these incon-

sistencies and hypocrisies, monstrous as they appear in the eyes of men sincerely pious, ought not to shock statesmen or philosophers."

"You do not pretend to say that there are no good Christians in the Anglican church?"

"No: I merely maintain that among such Christians the ideas of the greater number are illogical. I therefore do not envy for France the religious policy of England, though I admire at each step I take in this country, the religious submission of the Russians. Among the French, every clergyman who has influence becomes an oppressor in the eyes of the powerful minds, who, while governing, have been disorganising the country for the last hundred and thirty years, either openly by their revolutionary fanaticism, or tacitly by their philosophical indifference."

The really enlightened man with whom I talked appeared seriously to reflect; and then, after a long silence, resumed: —

"I am not so very far as you may suppose from sharing your opinion; for since I have travelled, one thing has always struck me as involving a contradiction—the unfriendliness of the liberals to the Catholic religion. I speak even of those who call themselves members of that church. How is it that such minds—for there are some who argue clearly, and carry reasons to their farthest consequences, — how is it that they cannot see that, in rejecting the Catholic religion, they deprive themselves of a guarantee against the local despotism which every government, of whatever character it may be, always tends to exercise?"

"You are right," I replied, "but the world is led by routine; and during centuries the strongest minds have so exclaimed against the intolerance and rapacity of Rome, that people have not yet accustomed themselves to shift their point of view, and to look at the Pope in his quality of spiritual head of the church, of unchangeable supporter of religious liberty, as well as in his capacity of temporal sovereign; to view him as a venerable power, embarrassed in his double duties — a complication perhaps unavoidable, if he would maintain his independence. How is it that people cannot see that a nation, when sincerely Catholic, must inevitably become the adversary of England, whose political power is based entirely upon heresy? Let France succour and defend with the energy of conviction the banner of the Catholic church, and by such act alone she will, from one end of the world to the other, be carrying on a powerful war against England. These are truths which ought to strike all minds, and which yet have hitherto only occurred to interested parties, and are consequently without weight: for it is another of the singularities of our age, that in France a man is considered wrong whenever it is suspected that he has any interest in being right. Such is the disorder of ideas produced by fifty years of revolutions, and more than a hundred of philosophical and literary cynicism. Have I not, then, good reason to envy your faith?"

"But the results of your religious policy would be to place the nation at the feet of the priests."

"Exaggerations as regards religion are the worst signs in the features of our age: but were the piety of the faithful as menacing as it appears to me harmless,

I would not shrink from the consequences involved in my principles. All who would do or obtain anything real in this world are obliged — to use your expression — to place themselves at the feet of somebody."

"True; but I should prefer to flatter even the government of the journalists rather than that of the priests: the advantages of liberty of thought counterbalance its inconveniences."

"Had you lived under it as I have done, and seen, as I have, the tyrannical minds of the greater number of the directors of the periodical press in France, and the results of their arbitrary power, you would not be quite so contented with that seductive word — liberty of thought. You would ask for the thing itself, and you would soon discover that the power of the journalists is exercised with as much partiality, and much less morality, than the ecclesiastical authority. To leave for a moment the subject of politics, just ask the newspapers by what they are governed in the fame or credit they accord to each individual! The morality of any power depends on the school through which the men have to pass who are destined to wield it. Now you cannot think that the school of journalism is more capable of inspiring men with really humane and independent sentiments than the sacerdotal school. All the question is comprised in this; and France is called upon to resolve it.

"But, without further reference to general considerations, give me an idea of the actual state of religion in your country; tell me, how are the minds of the men who teach the Gospel in Russia cultivated?"

Although I addressed a man of superior mind, the question would have been an indiscreet one at Petersburg: at Moscow I felt I might risk it, confiding in that mysterious liberty that reigns in this city, though we can neither fully account for nor define it; and though the confidence which it inspires may sometimes have to be dearly paid for.* The following is the summary of my Russian philosopher's reply: I use the word philosopher in its most favourable signification. After years passed in different European countries, he has returned to Russia very liberal, but very consistent. His reply then was as follows:

"There has always been very little preaching in the schismatic churches; and among us, the political and religious authority has been opposed more than elsewhere to theological discussions. Whenever there has been a wish to commence the debate of the questions at issue between Rome and Byzantium, silence has been imposed upon both parties. The points in dispute are of so little moment that the quarrel can only be perpetuated by means of ignorance. In several public institutions for education some religious instruction has been from time to time given, but this is only tolerated, and often forbidden: it is a positive, although it may appear to you an incredible fact, that religion is not publicly taught in Russia. The result is a multitude of sects, of which the government would not endure that you should suspect the existence.

"There is one which tolerates polygamy; another

* The reader will hereafter see the danger of such a confidence instanced by the arbitrary detention of a French citizen.

goes farther, and maintains not only the principle but the practice of promiscuous intercourse between the sexes.

"Our priests are forbidden to write even historical scripture; our peasants are constantly interpreting passages from the Bible, which, taken separately, without the context, and falsely applied, frequently give rise to some new heresy, most generally Calvinistic in its character. Before the pope of the village discovers it, it has already gained a hold among the inhabitants, and often spread among the neighbouring populations. Should the priest then treat the matter publicly, the contaminated peasants are sent to Siberia, which ruins the lord of the soil, who consequently, if previously aware of the circumstance, finds more than one way of causing the pastor to preserve a silence: so that, when at last the heresy does break out and attract the eyes of the supreme authority, the number of seceders is so considerable that it is no longer possible to act against them. Violence would divulge the mischief without stifling it; persuasion would open a door for discussion—the worst of all evils in the eyes of an absolute government: they can therefore do nothing but have recourse to silence, under whose veil the evil is concealed, without being cured; on the contrary, it gradually spreads.

"It is by religious divisions that the Russian empire will perish; therefore to envy in us, as you do, the power of faith, is to judge us without knowing us."

Such is the opinion of the most clear-sighted and sincere men that I have met in Russia.

A foreigner, worthy of credence, and who has been

long established in Moscow, has likewise informed me, that he dined some years ago with a merchant of Petersburg and *his three wives* — not concubines but legitimate wives. This merchant was a dissenter, a secret sectarian of some new church. I presume that the children borne him by his three helpmates would not be recognised as legitimate by the state; but his conscience as a Christian remained at ease.

If I had learnt this fact from a native, I might not have recounted it; for there are Russians who amuse themselves with lying, in order to perplex and lead astray too curious or too credulous travellers; a circumstance which tends to throw obstacles in the way of a pursuit, difficult everywhere, for those who would exercise it conscientiously, but doubly so here — I mean the pursuit of an observer.

The body of merchants is very powerful, very ancient, and very much esteemed in Moscow. The life of these rich dealers reminds us of the condition and manners of the Asiatic merchants, so well painted in the Arabian Nights. There are so many points of resemblance between Moscow and Bagdad, that in travelling through Russia we lose the curiosity to see Persia; we know it already.

I have just been present at a popular fête, held round the monastery of Devitschiepol. The actors are soldiers and peasants; the spectators, people of the higher classes, who go there in great numbers. The tents and booths for drinking are placed close to the cemetery. The feast, or fair, is kept in commemoration of some Russian saint, whose relics and images are ceremoniously visited between two libations of *kwass*. This evening an inconceivable consumption of that national liquor has here taken place.

The miraculous Virgin of Smolensk—others say it is her copy—is preserved in this convent, which contains eight churches.

Towards nightfall I entered the principal one, whose appearance is imposing. The obscurity aided the impression. The nuns undertake the charge of ornamenting the altars of their chapels; they acquit themselves with great punctilio of this duty—the easiest no doubt of any for people in their situation. As to the more difficult duties, they are not, I am told, particularly well observed: if I am to believe the best-informed parties, the conduct of the religious orders in Moscow is anything but edifying.

The church contains the tombs of several czarinas and princesses; amongst others, that of the ambitious Sophia, sister of Peter the Great, and of Eudoxia, the first consort of the same prince. This unhappy woman, repudiated in, I believe, 1696, was compelled to take the veil at Sousdal.

The Catholic church has so deep a respect for the indissoluble tie of marriage, that it does not permit a married woman to unite herself to any religious order unless her husband does the same, or takes, like her, monastic vows. Such is the rule, though with us, as with others, laws are often made to bend to interests.

The Imperial nun died at Moscow, in this monastery, 1731.

In general, the Russian convents have rather the appearance of a cluster of small houses, of a walled division of a city, than of a religious retreat. Being often destroyed and rebuilt, they have a modern look. In this climate nothing long resists the war of the elements. The whole country has the

aspect of a colony founded but yesterday. The Kremlin alone seems destined to brave the storms, and to live as long as the empire, of which it is the emblem and the bulwark. The idea of the irrevocable is always solemn.

In Moscow points of view abound. In the streets, you see only the houses that border them. But cross a large square, open a window, or ascend a terrace, and you immediately discover a new city spread over hills separated by valleys of wheat-fields, large pools, and even woods. This city encloses a country whose undulations resemble the waves of the sea. The sea viewed from afar, has always the appearance of a plain, however agitated its surface may be.

Moscow is the city for painters of character pieces; but architects, sculptors, and historical painters have nothing to do there. Clusters and masses of edifices, isolated in deserts, present multitudes of striking pictures. This ancient capital is the only large city which, although populous, still retains all the picturesque attributes of the country. It contains as many open roads as streets, as many cultivated fields as hills covered with buildings, as many deserted valleys as public squares. After leaving the crowded centre, we find ourselves among lakes, forests, and villages, rather than in a city. Here, rises a stately monastery, surmounted with its multitudes of church-steeples; there, hills built to the summit; others again bear only crops of corn, between them winds a stream of water; a little further are isolated edifices, as singular as varied in their style; among them are theatres with antique peristyles, and palaces of wood — the only private dwellings that display a national architecture.

All these varied structures are half concealed by verdant foliage, whilst the entire poetical decoration is crowned by the old Kremlin, with its indented walls and singular towers. That Parthenon of the Slavonians commands and protects Moscow: it reminds one of the Doge of Venice seated in the midst of his senate.

This evening, the tents where the holiday folks of Devitschiepol were congregated, emitted various scents, the mixture of which produced an atmosphere that was intolerable. There was perfumed Russian leather, spirituous liquors, sour beer, cabbages, the grease of the boots of Cossacks, and the musk and ambergris of numerous fashionable loiterers, who appeared determined to suffer from ennui, were it only out of aristocratic pride. I found it impossible long to breathe this mephitic air.

The greatest pleasure of the people is drunkenness; in other words, forgetfulness. Unfortunate beings! they must dream if they would be happy. As a proof of the good temper of the Russians, when the mugics get tipsy, these men, brutalised as they are, become softened, instead of infuriated. Unlike the drunkards of our country, who quarrel and fight, they weep and embrace each other. Curious and interesting nation! it would be delightful to make them happy. But the task is hard, if not impossible. Show me how to satisfy the vague desires of a giant,—young, idle, ignorant, ambitious, and so shackled that he can scarcely stir hand or foot. Never do I pity this people without equally pitying the all-powerful man who is their governor.

I soon left the taverns to walk in the square,

where the promenaders raised clouds of dust. The summers of Athens are long, but the days are short, and, owing to the sea-breeze, the air is scarcely hotter than it is at Moscow during the short northern heats. The insupportable summer of this year is, however, now nearly over; the nights return, and winter will soon follow. Beyond the fair, the view of the distant pine-forests that surround the city with a girdle of mourning, the slowly decreasing tints of a long twilight, all tended to heighten the effect of the monotonous landscape of the north, upon whose face poetry is written in a mystic tongue —a tongue which we do not understand.

In treading this oppressed earth I hear, without comprehending them, the Lamentations of an unknown Jeremiah. Despotism must give birth to prophets; —the future is the paradise of slaves and the hell of tyrants! A few notes of a plaintive song, oblique, deceitful, furtive glances —easily interpret to me the thoughts that spring in the hearts of this people: but youth, which, little valued though it be, is more favourable to study than riper age, could alone teach me thoroughly all the mysteries of their poetry of sorrow. I congratulate myself on having seen this festival, so devoid of gaiety, but, likewise, so different from those of other lands. The Cossacks were to be seen in great numbers among the promenaders and the drinkers who filled the square. They formed silent groups around singers, whose piercing voices chanted forth melancholy words set to a softly pleasing tune, although its rhythm was strongly marked. The air was the national song of the Don Cossacks. It has a kind of resemblance to

some old Spanish melodies, but is more plaintive; it is soft yet penetrating as the warble of the nightingale when heard at a distance, by night, in the depths of the woods. Now and then the by-standers repeated in chorus the last words of the strophe.

The following is a prosaic translation, verse by verse, which a Russian has just made for me:

THE YOUNG COSSACK.

They shout the loud alarm,
My war steed paws the ground;
I hear him neigh,
O! let me go!

THE MAIDEN.

Let others rush to death:
Too young and gentle, thou
Shalt yet watch o'er our cottage home;
Thou must not pass the Don.

THE YOUNG COSSACK.

The foe, the foe,— to arms! —
I go to fight for thee:
If gentle here, against the foe,
Though young, I still am brave.
The old Cossack would blush with wrath and shame
If I should stay behind.

THE MAIDEN.

See thy mother weeping,
Behold her sinking frame;
We shall be victims of thy rage,
Ere yet the foe is seen.

THE YOUNG COSSACK.

When they talk of the campaign,
They would call me a poltroon:
But if I die, and comrades praise my name,
Thy tears shall soon be dried.

THE MAIDEN.

Never! we'll sleep within the same dark tomb;
If thou must die, I follow.
Thou goest! but still together we shall fall:
Adieu! my tears are spent.

The sentiment embodied in these words appears modern, but the melody has a charm of antiquity and simplicity, which would make me willing to pass hours in listening to them, as repeated by the voices of the natives.

They formerly danced in Paris a Russian dance, which this music has recalled to my mind. But when heard on the spot, national melodies produce a far more powerful impression than they can do elsewhere. There is more melancholy than passion in the songs of the northern people; but the impression which they cause is never forgotten, whereas a more lively emotion soon vanishes. Melancholy is more abiding than passion. After having listened to this air for some time, I found it less monotonous and more expressive, — such is the ordinary effect of simple music; repetition imparts to it a new power. The Uralian Cossacks have also a song peculiar to themselves, which I regret not having heard.

This race of men deserves a separate study, but it could not be easily prosecuted by a stranger, hurried as I am. The Cossacks form a military family, a subdued horde, rather than a body of troops subjected to discipline. Attached to their chiefs as a dog is to his master, they obey orders with more affection, and less servility, than the other Russian soldiers. In a land where nothing is defined, they view themselves as allies; they do not feel as slaves

of the Imperial government. Their activity, their wandering habits, the speed and spirit of their horses, the co-acting patience and address of man and beast, their mutual endurance of fatigue and hardship, constitute, in themselves, a power. It is impossible not to admire the geographical instinct which aids these savage guides of the army to lead the way, without reference to roads, in the countries they invade, whether they be the wildest and most sterile deserts, or the most populous and civilised lands. In war, does not the very name of Cossack spread terror among the enemy? The generals who know how to make use of such a light cavalry have a means of action at their disposal, which the commanders of the most civilised armies cannot obtain.

The Cossacks are said to be naturally amiable. They have more gentleness and sensibility than could be fairly expected in so rude a community; but their excessive ignorance is lamentable in its effects, both on themselves and their masters.

When I think of the way in which their officers avail themselves of the credulity of the soldier, every higher feeling of my mind rises indignantly against a government which can descend to such subterfuges, or which does not punish such of its servants as dare to have recourse to them.

I have it from good authority, that many of the Cossack chiefs led their men away from their country during the war of 1814 and 1815, saying to them: "Kill your enemies; strike without fear. If you fall in combat, you will, within three days, be again with your wives and children; you will rise again, both in

flesh and bone, body and soul. What then have you to fear?"

Men accustomed to recognise the voice of God the Father in that of their officers, embraced literally the promises made to them, and fought with that courage with which we are acquainted, — namely, they fled like marauders whenever they could escape from danger, and faced death like soldiers whenever it was inevitable. To excite soldiers by legitimate means to brave death, is the duty of a commander; but to lead them to death by deceiving them, and by concealing it from them, is to take all virtue from their courage, all moral dignity from their devotion. If war excuses every thing, as certain people pretend, what shall excuse war?

Is it possible to picture to ourselves without horror and disgust, the moral state of a nation whose armies are thus directed? This trait has happened to come to my knowledge; but how many similar or worse must remain unknown! When once people have recourse to puerile subterfuges to govern their fellow men, where are they to stop? I will conclude with a fable, which appears as if made expressly to justify my indignation. The idea is that of a Polish bishop's, famous for his wit, under the reign of Frederick II.: the imitation in French is by Count Elzéar de Sabran.*

L'ATTELAGE. — FABLE.

Un habile cocher menait un équipage,
Avec quatre chevaux par couples attelés;
Après les avoir muselés,

* Uncle of the author. — *Trans.*

En les guidant, il leur tint se langage :
Ne vous laisser pas devancer,
Disait il a ceux de derrière ;
Ne vous laisser pas dépasser,
Ni même atteindre en si belle carrière
Disait-il a ceux de devant,
Qui l'écoutaient le nez au vent ;
Un passant dans cette occurrence,
Lui dit alors à ce propos :
Vous trompez ces pauvres chevaux,
Il est vrai, reprit il, mais la voiture avance.

CHAP. XXIX.

THE TARTAR MOSQUE. — THE DESCENDANTS OF THE MONGOLS IN MOSCOW. — TOWER OF SOUKAREFF. — COLOSSAL RESERVOIR. — BYZANTINE ARCHITECTURE. — PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS. — THE EMPEROR EVERYWHERE. — DISSIMILARITY IN THE SLAVONIAN AND GERMAN CHARACTERS. — THE NOBLEMEN'S CLUB. — POLITE EDUCATION OF THE RUSSIANS. — HABITS OF THE HIGHER CLASSES. — A RUSSIAN COFFEE-HOUSE. — RELIGIOUS BELIEF OF THE OLD SERFS. — SOCIETY IN MOSCOW. — A COUNTRY HOUSE IN A CITY. REAL POLITENESS. — REVIEW OF RUSSIAN CHARACTER. — THEIR WANT OF GENEROSITY. — CONTEMPT FOR THE LAW OF KINDNESS. — SEDUCTIVE MANNERS OF THE RUSSIANS. — THEIR FICKLENESS. — RESEMBLANCE OF THE POLES AND RUSSIANS. — LIBERTINISM IN MOSCOW. — MORAL CONSEQUENCES OF DESPOTISM. — OBSERVATIONS ON MODERN LITERATURE. — DRUNKENNESS A VICE OF THE HIGHEST CLASSES. — RUSSIAN CURIOSITY. — PORTRAIT OF PRINCE —— AND HIS COMPANIONS. — MURDER IN A NUNNERY. — CONVERSATION AT A TABLE-D'HÔTE. — THE LOVELACE OF THE KREMLIN. — A BURLESQUE PETITION. — MODERN PRUDERY. — PARTING SCENE WITH PRINCE ——. — AN ELEGANT COACHMAN. — MORALS OF THE CITIZENS' WIVES. — LIBERTINISM THE FRUIT OF DESPOTISM. — MORAL LICENCE IN LIEU OF POLITICAL FREEDOM. — CONDITION OF THE SERFS AND OTHER CLASSES. — NATURE OF RUSSIAN AMBITION. — RESULTS OF THE SYSTEM OF PETER THE GREAT. — THE TRUE POWER OF RUSSIA. — DANGER OF TRUTH. — SONGS OF THE RUSSIAN GYPSIES. — MUSICAL REVOLUTION ACCOMPLISHED BY DUPREZ. — THE THEATRE IN RUSSIA. — FRENCH LANGUAGE IN RUSSIA UNDERSTOOD SUPERFICIALLY. — A RUSSIAN IN HIS LIBRARY. — THE TARANDASSE. — RUSSIAN IDEAS OF DISTANCE. — A NOBLE TRAIT IN RUSSIAN CHARACTER.

DURING the last two days I have seen many sights; among others, the Tartar Mosque. The religion of the conquerors is now tolerated in a corner of the capital of the vanquished; and this, only on condition

that the Christians have free permission to enter the Mohammedan sanctuary.

The mosque is a small and mean edifice, and the men there allowed to worship God and the prophet, have a wretched, timid, dirty, and poverty-stricken appearance. They come to prostrate themselves in this temple every Friday, upon a filthy piece of woollen mat, which each carries with him. Their graceful Asiatic garments are become rags; their own condition is abject: they live as much apart as possible from the population which surrounds them. In seeing these beggars in appearance, creeping in the midst of actual Russia, it is difficult to realise the idea of the tyranny which their fathers exercised over the Muscovites.

The unfortunate sons of conquerors trade at Moscow in the provisions and the merchandise of Asia, and adhere as much as possible to the practice of their religion, avoiding the use of wines and strong liquors, and shutting up their women, or at least veiling them, in order to shield them from the eyes of other men; a precaution which is, however, little needed, for the Mongol race present but few attractions. High cheek bones, flat noses, small sunken black eyes, frizzled hair, a brown and oily skin, a low stature, an appearance of filth and squalor, — such were the characteristics which I remarked in the men of this degenerate race, and in the small number of women of whose features I could obtain a glimpse.

May it not be said that divine justice, so incomprehensible when viewed in the fate of individuals, becomes brightly visible when mirrored in the destiny of nations? The life of every man is a drama, played

upon one theatre, but whose plot will be unravelled on the boards of another. It is not thus with the life of nations: their instructive tragedy begins and ends upon earth; and it is this which makes history a sacred scripture: history is the justification of Providence.

Saint Paul has said, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: the powers that be are ordained of God." The church, with him, called men from a state of isolation nearly two thousand years ago, by baptizing them citizens of an eternal community, a society of which all others are but imperfect representations. These truths are not falsified; on the contrary, they are confirmed by experience. The more deeply we study the character of the different nations who share the earth, the more clearly do we recognise that their fate is the consequence of their religion. The religious element is essential to the duration of society: men need a belief in the supernatural, in order to raise themselves from that pretended state of nature which is a state of violence and iniquity; and the miseries of oppressed races are no more than the punishment of their voluntary errors in matters of faith. Such is the belief which my numerous pilgrimages have instilled into me. Every traveller is obliged to become a philosopher, and more than a philosopher; for it is necessary to become a Christian to contemplate without shocked senses the condition of the various races dispersed upon the globe, and to meditate without despair upon the dealings of God, — mysterious causes of the vicissitudes of man.

I am recording reflections made in the mosque

during the prayer of the children of Bati, now become pariahs among those they enslaved. The present condition of a Tartar in Russia is inferior to that of a Muscovite serf.

The Russians take credit for the tolerance which they accord to the faith of their ancient tyrants. I find such tolerance more ostentatious than philosophical; and, for the people to whom it is extended, it is but one humiliation more. Were I in the place of the descendants of those implacable Mongols, who were so long masters of Russia and the terror of the world, I would prefer praying to God in the secret of my heart, rather than in the shadow of a mosque accorded by the pity of my ancient tributaries.

When I wander over Moscow without aim and without guide, I never weary. Each street, each outlet, affords a view of a fresh city; a city which, studded with its embroidered, pierced, and battlemented walls, broken with towers, and supporting multitudes of turrets and watch-towers, appears as though built by the genii. Then there is the Kremlin, poetical in its aspect, historical by its name, the root of an empire, the heart of a city, and which is for me all Moscow. I return there with an ever-new attraction; but it is necessary carefully to avoid examining in detail the incoherent masses of monuments with which this walled mountain is encumbered. The exquisite sense of art, the talent, that is, of finding the one only perfectly just expression of an original conception, is unknown to the Russians; nevertheless, when giants copy, their imitations always possess a kind of beauty: the works of genius

are grand, the works of physical power are great: and this alone is something.

To divert my mind for a moment from the terrific Kremlin, I have paid a visit to the tower of Soukareff, built on an eminence near to one of the entrances of the city. The first story is a vast structure, containing an immense reservoir, from whence nearly all the water drunk in Moscow is distributed to the different parts of the city. The view of this walled lake, reared high in air, produces a singular impression. The architecture is heavy and gloomy; but the Byzantine arcades, the massy flights of steps, and the ornaments in the style of the Lower Empire, make the whole very imposing. This style is perpetuated in Moscow: had it been applied with discernment, it would have given birth to the only national architecture possible to the Russians: though invented in a temperate climate, it equally accords with the wants of northern people, and the habits of those of the south. The interior of Byzantine edifices are very similar to ornamented cellars; the solidity of the massive vaults, and the obscurity of the walls, offer a shelter from the cold as well as from the sun.

I have also been shown the University, the School of Cadets, the Institutions of St. Catherine and of Saint Alexander, the Hospitals for Widows and for Foundlings, all vast and pompous in appearance. The Russians pride themselves in having so great a number of magnificent public establishments to show to strangers: for my part, I should be content with less of this kind of splendour; for no places are more tedious to wander over than these white and sumptuously-monotonous palaces, where every thing is

conducted in military order, and where human life seems reduced to the action of the pendulum of a clock.

The reader must learn from others all that is to be seen in these useful and superb nurseries of officers, mothers of families, and governesses: it will suffice for me to say, that the institutions, half political, half charitable, appear models of good order, care, and cleanliness—a fact which does honour to the heads of the different schools, as well as to the supreme head of the empire.

It is impossible for a single moment to forget that one individual by whom Russia lives, thinks, and acts,—that man, alike the science and the conscience of his people, who commands, measures, and distributes all that is necessary or permitted to other men, none of whom may think, feel, will, or imagine, except within the sphere marked out by the supreme wisdom which foresees, or is supposed to foresee, all the wants of the individual as well as of the State.

Among us there is the fatigue of licence and variety; here we are discouraged by uniformity, frozen over by pedantry, which yet we may not separate from the idea of order; whence it follows, that we hate what we ought to love. Russia, that infant nation, is nothing more than an immense college; every thing is conducted there as in a military school, the only difference being, that the scholars never leave it until they die.

All that is German in the spirit of the Russian government is antipathetic to the Slavonian character. The latter oriental, nonchalant, capricious, and poetical people, if they said what they thought, would

bitterly complain of the Germanic discipline imposed upon them since the times of Alexis, Peter the Great, and Catherine II., by a race of foreign princes. The imperial family, let it do its best, will be always too Teutonic to govern the Russians without violence, and to feel as one with them.* The peasants alone are deceived.

I have carried the sight-seeing duties of the traveller so far as to allow myself to be taken to a riding-school, the largest, I believe, which exists. The ceiling is supported by light and bold iron arches. The whole edifice is wonderful in its kind.

The club of the nobles is closed during the present season. I visited it also as a matter of conscience. In the principal hall is a statue of Catherine II. This hall is ornamented with pillars and a semi-rotunda; it will contain about 3000 persons; and, during the winter, magnificent balls are given in it. I can well believe this, for the Russian nobles reserve all their luxury for pleasures of parade. To dazzle is, with them, to display civilisation. It is but little more than one hundred years since Peter the Great dictated to them the first laws of politeness, and instituted assemblies similar to those of old Europe; obliging the men to admit the other sex into these circles, and exhorting them to take off their hats when they entered an apartment. While thus teaching them common civility, he was himself

* The Romanows were originally Prussians; and, since the election that placed them on the throne, they have usually intermarried with German princesses, contrary to the custom of the ancient Muscovite sovereigns.

exercising the vilest of all professions — that of the headsman. He has been seen in a single evening to strike off twenty heads with his own hand, and has been heard to boast of his address. Such was the education, and such the example, given to the Russians by this worthy heir of the Ivans, — this prince whom they have made their God, and whom they view as the eternal model of a Russian sovereign!

The new converts to civilisation have not yet lost their taste, as upstarts, for every thing that dazzles — every thing that attracts the eye. Children and savages always love these things. The Russians are children who have the habit, but not the experience of misfortune; hence the mixture of levity and causticity which characterises them. The enjoyments of a calm and equable life, adapted solely to satisfy the affections of intimacy, to administer to the pleasures of conversation and of mind, would never long suffice them: not that these great lords show themselves altogether insensible to refined pleasures; but, to captivate the haughty frivolity of such disguised satraps, to fix their vagrant imaginations, lively excitements are necessary. The love of play, intemperance, libertinism, and the gratifications of vanity, can scarcely fill the void in their satiated hearts: the creation of God does not furnish wherewith these unhappy victims of wealth and indolence can get through their weary days. In their proud misery they summon to their aid the spirit of destruction. All modern Europe is the prey of ennui. It is this which attests the nature of the life led by the youth of the present day: but Russia suffers from the evil worse than the other communities; for here every

thing is excessive. To describe the ravages of society in a population like that of Moscow would be difficult: nowhere have the mental maladies engendered in the soul by ennui — that passion of men who have no passions — appeared to me so serious or so frequent as among the higher classes in Russia: it may be said that society has here commenced by its abuses. When vice does not suffice to enable the human heart to shake off the ennui that preys upon it, that heart proceeds to crime.

The interior of a Russian coffee-house is very curious. It consists generally of a large, low apartment, badly lighted, and usually occupying the first floor of the house. The waiters are dressed in white shirts, girded round the middle, and falling like a tunic over loose white pantaloons. Their hair is long and smooth, like that of all the lower orders of Russians; and their whole adjustment reminds one of the theophilanthropes of the French republic, or the priests of the Opera when paganism was the fashion at the theatre. They serve you with excellent tea, superior, indeed, to any found in other lands, with coffee and liqueurs; but this is done with a silence and solemnity very different from the noisy gaiety which reigns in the *cafés* of Paris. In Russia, all popular pleasures are melancholy in their character: mirth is viewed as a privilege; consequently, I always find it assumed, affected, overdone, and worse than the natural sadness. Here, the man who laughs is either an actor, a drunkard, or a flatterer.

This reminds me of the times when the Russian serfs believed, in the simplicity of their abjectness, that heaven was only made for their masters: dread-

ful humility of misfortune! Such was the manner in which the Greek church taught Christianity to the people.

The society of Moscow is agreeable; the mixture of the patriarchal traditions of the old world with the polished manners of the modern, produces a combination that is, in a manner, original. The hospitable customs of ancient Asia and the elegant language of civilised Europe have met together at this point of the globe, to render life pleasant and easy. Moscow, fixed on the limits of two continents, marks, in the middle of the earth, a spot for rest between London and Pekin.

A small number of letters of introduction suffice to put a stranger in communication with a crowd of persons, distinguished either by fortune, rank, or mind. The *début* of a traveller is here easy.

I was invited a few days ago to dine at a country-house. It is a pavilion situated within the limits of the city, but to reach it, we had to traverse, for more than a league, fields that resemble steppes, to skirt solitary pools of waters; and, at last, on approaching the house, we perceived, beyond the garden, a dark and deep forest of firs, which borders the exterior bounds of Moscow. Who would not have been struck at the sight of these profound shades, these majestic solitudes, in a city where all the luxuries and refinements of modern civilisation are to be found? Such contrasts are characteristics; nothing similar is to be seen elsewhere.

I entered a wooden house—another singularity. In Moscow both rich and poor are sheltered by planks and boards, as in the primitive cottages. But the in-

terior of these large cabins exhibits the luxury of the finest palaces of Europe. If I lived at Moscow, I would have a wooden house. It is the only kind of habitation the style of which is national, and, what is more important, it is the only kind that is adapted to the climate. Houses of wood are esteemed by the true Muscovites as warmer and healthier than those of stone.

We dined in the garden; and, that nothing should be wanting to the originality of the scene, I found the table laid under a tent. The conversation, although between men only, and very lively, was decent — a thing rarely known among the nations who believe themselves the first in civilisation. The guests were persons who had both seen and read much; and their views appeared to me very clear and just. The Russians are apes in the manners and customs of refined life; but those who think (it is true their number is limited) become themselves again, in familiar conversation — Greeks, namely, endowed with a quickness and sagacity which is hereditary.

The dinner seemed to me short, although in reality it lasted a long time, and although, at the moment of sitting down at table, I saw the guests for the first time, and the master of the house for the second. This remark is worthy of notice, for great and true politeness could alone have put a stranger so quickly at his ease. Among all the recollections of my journey, that of this day will remain as one of the most agreeable.

At the moment of leaving Moscow, never to return, except merely to pass through it, I do not think it will be inappropriate for me summarily to review the

character of the Russians, so far as I have been able to discern it, after a sojourn in their country, very brief, it is true, but employed without cessation in attentively observing a multitude of persons and of things, and in comparing, with scrupulous care, innumerable facts. The variety of objects which passes before the eyes of a stranger, as much favoured by circumstances as I have been, and as active as I am when excited by curiosity, supplies, to a certain extent, the time and leisure which I have wanted. I naturally take pleasure in admiring: this disposition ought to procure some credit for my opinions when I do not admire.

In general, the men of this country do not appear to me inclined to generosity; they scarcely believe in that quality; they would deny it if they dared; and if they do not deny it, they despise it, because they have nothing in themselves by which to apprehend its nature. They have more finesse than delicacy, more good temper than sensibility, more pliancy than easy contentedness, more grace than tenderness, more discernment than invention, more wit than imagination, more observation than wit, more of the spirit of selfish calculation than all these qualities together. They never labour to produce results useful to others, but always to obtain some recompense for themselves. Creative genius has been denied them; the enthusiasm which produces the sublime is to them unknown; sentiments which seek only within themselves for approval and for recompense, they cannot understand. Take from them the moving influences of interest, fear, and vanity, and you deprive them of all action. If they enter the

empire of arts, they are but slaves serving in a palace; the sacred solitudes of genius are to them inaccessible; the chaste love of the beautiful cannot satisfy their desires.

It is with their actions in practical life, as with their creations in the world of thought, — where artifice triumphs, magnanimity passes for imposture.

Greatness of mind looks to itself for a recompense; but if it asks for nothing from others, it commands much, for it seeks to render men better: here it would render them worse, because it would be considered a mask. Clemency is called a weakness among a people hardened by terror: implacable severity makes them bend the knee, pardon would cause them to lift the head; they can be subdued, but no one knows how to convince them; incapable of pride, they can yet be audacious; they revolt against gentleness, but they obey ferocity, which they take for power.

This explains to me the system of government adopted by the emperor, without, however, leading me to approve it. That prince knows how to make himself obeyed, and acts in a way to command obedience; but, in politics, I am no admirer of the compulsory system. Here, discipline is the end; elsewhere, it is the means. Is it pardonable in a prince to resist the good dictates of his heart, because he believes it dangerous to manifest sentiments superior to those of his people? In my eyes, the worst of all weaknesses is that which renders a man pitiless and unmerciful. To be ashamed of being magnanimous is to confess an unworthiness of possessing supreme power.

The people are in need of being incessantly re-

minded of a world better than the present world. How can they be made to believe in God, if they are not to know what is pardon? Prudence is only virtuous when it does not exclude a higher virtue. If the emperor has not in his heart more clemency than he displays in his policy, I pity Russia; if his sentiments are superior to his acts, I pity the emperor.

The Russians, when amiable, have a fascination in their manners whose spell we feel in spite of every prejudice; first, without observing it, and afterwards, without being able to throw it off. To define such an influence would be to explain the power of imagination. The charm forms an imperious, though secret attraction, — a sovereign power vested in the innate grace of the Slavonians, that gift of grace which, in society, can supply the want of all other gifts, and the want of which, nothing can supply.

Imagine the defunct French politeness again restored to life, and become really all that it appeared — imagine the most agreeable and unstudied complaisance — an involuntary, not an acquired, absence of egotism — an ingenuity in good taste — a pleasant carelessness of choice — an aristocratic elegance without hauteur — an easiness without impertinence — the instinct of superiority tempered by the security which accompanies rank: —— but I am wrong in attempting to delineate with too finely drawn strokes; these are delicacies in the shading which must be felt. We may divine them, but we must avoid attempting to fix by words their too elusive forms. Let it suffice that all these, and many other graces, are found in the manners and conversation of the really elegant Russians, and more frequently, more com-

pletely, among those who have not travelled, but who, remaining in Russia, have nevertheless been in contact with distinguished foreigners.

These charms, these illusions, give them a sovereign power over hearts: so long as you remain in the presence of the privileged beings, you are under a spell; and the charm is double, for, such is their triumph, that you imagine yourself to be to them what they are to you. Time and the world, engagements and affairs, are forgotten; the duties of society are abolished; one single interest remains—the interest of the moment; one single person survives—the person present, who is always the person liked. The desire of pleasing, carried to this excess, infallibly succeeds: it is the sublime of good taste; it is elegance the most refined, and yet as natural as an instinct. This supreme amiability is not assumed or artificial, it is a gift which needs only to be exercised; to prolong the illusion you have but to prolong your stay. The Russians are the best actors in the world: to produce an effect, they need none of the accompaniments of scenery.

Every traveller has reproached them with their versatility; the reproach is but too well founded: you feel yourself forgotten in bidding them adieu. I attribute this, not only to levity of character, to inconstancy of heart, but also to the want of solid and extended information. They like you to leave them; for they fear lest they should be discovered when they allow themselves to be approached for too long a time uninterruptedly. Thence arises the fondness and the indifference which follow each other so rapidly among them. This apparent inconstancy is

only a precaution of vanity, well understood and sufficiently common among people of the fashionable world in every land. It is not their faults that people conceal with the greatest care, it is their emptiness; they do not blush to be perverse, but they are humbled at being insignificant. In accordance with this principle, the Russians of the higher classes willingly exhibit every thing in their minds and character likely to please at first sight, and which keeps up conversation for a few hours: but if you endeavour to go behind the decorated scene that thus dazzles you, they stop you as they would a rash intruder, who might take it into his head to go behind the screen of their bedchambers, of which the elegance is entirely confined to the outer side of the division. They give you a reception dictated by curiosity; they afterwards repel you through prudence.

This applies to friendship as well as to love, to the society of men as well as to that of women. In giving the portrait of a Russian, we paint the nation, just as a soldier under arms conveys the idea of all his regiment. Nowhere is the influence of unity in the government and in education so sensibly visible as here. Every mind wears its uniform. Alas! how greatly must those suffer, be they even no longer young and sensitive, who bring among this people—cold-hearted and keen-witted both by nature and social education—the simplicity of other lands! I picture to myself the sensibility of the Germans, the confiding *naïveté* and the careless gaiety of the French, the constancy of the Spaniards, the passion of the English*,

* La constance des Espagnols, la passion des Anglais.

the *abandon* and good nature of the true, the old Italians, all in the toils of the inherent coquetry of the Russians; and I pity the unfortunate foreigners who could believe for a moment they might become actors in the theatre which awaits them here. In matters of the affections, the Russians are the gentlest wild beasts that are to be seen on earth; and their well-concealed claws unfortunately divest them of none of their charms. I have never felt a fascination to be compared to it, unless in Polish society: a new relation discoverable between the two families! Civil hate in vain strives to separate these people; nature re-unites them in spite of themselves. If policy did not compel one to oppress the other, they would recognise and love each other. The Poles are chivalric and catholic Russians; with the further difference, that, in Poland, it is the women who form the life of society, or, in other words, who command, and that in Russia, it is the men.

These same people, so naturally amiable, so well endowed, so extremely agreeable, sometimes go astray in paths which men of the coarsest characters would avoid.

It is impossible to picture to one's self the life of many of the most distinguished young persons of Moscow. These men, who bear names and belong to families known throughout Europe, are lost in excesses that will not bear to be described. It is inconceivable how they can resist for six months the system they adopt for life, and maintain with a constancy which would be worthy of heaven, if its object were virtuous. Their temperaments seem to be made expressly for the anticipated hell;—for it is

thus that I qualify the life of a professed debauchee in Moscow.

In physical respects, the climate, and in moral respects, the government of this land devour all that is weak in its germ: all that is not robust or stupid dies early, none survive but the debased, and natures strong in good as in evil. Russia is the land of unbridled passions or of passive characters, of rebels or of automata, of conspirators or of machines. There is here nothing intermediate between the tyrant and the slave, between the madman and the animal: the *juste milieu* is unknown; nature will not tolerate it; the excess of cold, like that of heat, pushes man to extremes.

Notwithstanding the contrasts which I here point out, all resemble each other in one respect — all have levity of character. Among these men of the moment, the projects of the evening are constantly lost in the forgetfulness of the morrow. It may be said, that with them the heart is the empire of chance; nothing can stand against their propensity to embrace and to abandon. They live and die without perceiving the serious side of existence. Neither good nor evil with them possesses any reality: they can cry, but they cannot be unhappy. Palaces, mountains, giants, sylphs, passions, solitude, brilliant crowds, supreme happiness, unbounded grief, — but it is useless to enumerate: a quarter of an hour's conversation with them suffices to bring before your eyes the whole universe. Their prompt and contemptuous glance surveys, without admiring any thing, the monuments raised by human intelligence during centuries. They fancy they can place themselves above every thing, because they de-

spise every thing. Their very praises are insults: they eulogise like people who envy; they prostrate themselves, but always unwillingly, before the objects they believe to be the idols of fashion. But at the first breath of wind the cloud succeeds the picture, and soon the cloud vanishes in turn. Dust, smoke, and chaotic nothingness, are all that can issue from such inconsistent heads.

No plant takes root in a soil thus profoundly agitated. Every thing is swept away; every thing becomes levelled; all is wrapt in vapour. But from this fluid element nothing is finally expelled. Friendship or love that was imagined lost, will often again rise, evoked by a glance or a single word, and at the very moment when least thought of; though, in truth, it is only thus revived to be almost as quickly again dismissed. Under the ever-waving wand of these magicians, life is one continued phantasmagoria—one long fatiguing game, in which, however, the clumsy alone ruin themselves; for when all the world is cheating, nobody is being cheated: in a word, they are false as water, to use the poetical expression of Shakspeare, the broad strokes of whose pencil are the revelations of nature.

This explains to me why hitherto they have appeared to be doomed by Providence to a despotic government: it is in pity as much as through custom that they are tyrannised over.

If, in addressing myself to the friend to whom I send this chapter, I addressed myself to but one philosopher, here would be the place for inserting details of manners which resemble nothing that he has ever read of, even in France, where every thing is written and described; but, behind him, I see the public,

and this consideration stops me. My friend must therefore imagine what I do not relate; or rather, to speak more correctly, that friend will never be able to imagine it. The excesses of despotism, which can alone give birth to the moral anarchy that here reigns around me, being only known by hearsay, their consequences would appear incredible. Where legitimate liberty is wanted, illegitimate liberty is sure to spring up; where the use is interdicted, the abuse will certainly creep in: deny the right, and you create the fraud; refuse justice, and you open the door to crime.

Under the influence of these principles, Moscow is, of all the cities in Europe, the one in which the dissolute man of the fashionable world has the widest field for his career. The government is too well informed not to know that under an absolute rule some kind of revolt must somewhere break out; but it prefers that this revolt should be in manners rather than in politics. Here lies the secret of the licence of the one party and the tolerance of the other. The corruption of manners in Moscow has also other causes. One is, that the greater number of well-born, but, by their conduct, ill-famed persons, retire when disgraced, and here establish themselves.

After the orgies which our modern literature takes pleasure in depicting, if we are to believe the authors, with a moral intention, we ought to be familiar with all the features of dissolute life. I pass over the question of the pretended utility of their aim; I can tolerate their long though useless sermons: but there is in literature something more dangerous even than the immoral; it is the ignoble. If, under the pretext of provoking salutary reforms in the lowest classes

of society, the taste of the superior classes is corrupted, evil is done. To present to women the language of the pot-houses, to make men of rank in love with coarse vulgarities, is to injure the manners of a nation in a way for which no legal reform can compensate. Literature is lost among us, because our most intellectual writers, forgetting all poetical sentiment, all respect for the beautiful, write for the taste of the town; and, instead of elevating their new readers to the views of delicate and noble minds, they lower themselves to the point of ministering to their coarsest appetites. They have rendered literature an ardent liquor, because, with sensibility, the faculty of tasting and feeling simple things is lost. This is a more serious evil than all the inconsistencies that have been noted in the laws and manners of the former state of society. It is another consequence of the modern materialism, which would reduce every thing to the useful, and which can only discern the useful in immediate and positive results. Woe to the land where the men of genius lower themselves to play the part of commissioners of police! When an author feels himself called upon to describe vice he should at least redouble his respect for good taste; he should propose to himself the ideal truth for type even of his most vulgar characters. But too often, under the professions of our moralist, or rather moralising romance-writers, we discover less love of virtue than cynic indifference to good taste. There is a want of poetry in their works, because there is a want of faith in their hearts. To ennoble the picture of vice, as Richardson has done in his "Lovelace," is not to corrupt the mind, but to avoid soiling the imagination and

lowering the tone of sentiment. Such respect for the delicacy of the reader has, if you like, a moral object; it is far more essential to civilised society than an exact knowledge of the turpitude of its bandits, and the virtues of its prostitutes. I must ask pardon for this excursion in the fields of contemporary criticism, and hasten to return to the strict and painful duties of the veracious traveller, duties that are unfortunately too often opposed to these laws of literary composition which a respect for my language and my country has induced me to refer to.

The writings of our boldest painters of manners are but weak copies of the originals which have been daily presented to my eyes since I have been in Russia.

Bad faith injures every thing, but more especially the affairs of commerce: here it has yet another sphere of action; it incommodes the libertines in the execution of their most secret contracts. The continual alterations of money, favour, in Moscow, every species of subterfuge; nothing is clear and precise in the mouth of a Russian, nothing is well defined nor well guaranteed; and the purse always gains something by the slipperiness of the language. This extends even to amorous transactions: each party, knowing the duplicity of the other, requires payment in advance, whence much difficulty arises.

The female peasants are more cunning than even the women of the town. Sometimes these young and doubly-corrupted savages violate the primary laws of prostitution, and escape with their booty, without paying the dishonourable debt they had contracted. The bandits of other lands observe their oaths, and

maintain the good faith of comradeship in crime. The dissolute and abandoned in Russia know nothing that is sacred, not even the religion of debauchery, though it be a guarantee essential to the exercise of their profession, — so true is it that the commerce even of shame cannot be carried on without probity.

Civilisation, which elsewhere elevates the mind, here perverts it. It had been better for the Russians had they remained savages: — to polish slaves is to betray society. It is needful that a man possess a fund of virtue to enable him to bear culture.

Under the influence of their government the Russian people have become taciturn and deceitful, although naturally gentle, lively, docile and pacific. Assuredly these are rare endowments: and yet, where there is a want of sincerity there is nothing. The Mongolian avidity of this race, and its incurable suspicion and distrust, are revealed by the least as well as the most important circumstances of life. Should you owe twenty roubles to a workman, he would return twenty times a day to ask for them, unless, at least, you were a dreaded nobleman. In Latin lands a promise is a sacred thing — a pledge to the giver as well as the receiver. Among the Greeks, and their disciples the Russians, the word of a man is nothing better than the false key of a robber — it serves to break into the interests of others.

To make the sign of the cross in the streets before an image, and on sitting down to table, is all that the Greek religion teaches.

Intemperance is here carried to such excess, that one of the men, the most liked, and whose society is the most courted in Moscow, disappears every year

for six weeks, neither more nor less. If it be asked what has become of him, the answer, "he is only gone to have a fuddling bout"! satisfies every body.

The Russians have too much levity to be vindictive; they are graceful debauchees. I take pleasure in repeating that they are supremely pleasant and agreeable; but their politeness, insinuating as it is, sometimes becomes exaggerated and fatiguing. This often makes me regret coarseness, which has, at least, the merit of being natural. The first law of politeness is to indulge only in praises that can be accepted; all others are insults. True politeness is nothing more than a code of flatteries well disguised. What is so flattering as cordiality? for, in order to manifest it, sympathy must first be felt.

If there are very polite persons among the Russians, there are also very impolite. The bad taste of these latter is shocking. They inquire, after the manner of savages, into things the most important, as well as into the most trifling bagatelles, without any modesty and with the utmost minuteness. They assail you with impertinent or puerile questions, and act at the same time as children and as spies. The Slavonians are naturally inquisitive; and it is only good education, and the habits of the best society, that can repress their curiosity: those who have not these advantages never tire of putting you in the witness-box: they must know the objects and the results of your journey; they will ask boldly, and repeat such interrogations unceasingly — if you prefer Russia to other lands; if you think Moscow more beautiful than Paris; if the Winter Palace at Petersburg is finer than the Tuileries; if Krasnacselo is larger than

Versailles: and with each new individual to whom you are introduced you have to re-commence the repeating of this catechism, in which national vanity hypocritically draws upon the urbanity of foreigners, and ventures its own rudeness in reliance upon the politeness of others.

I have been introduced to a person who was described to me as a singular character, worthy of observation. He is a young man of illustrious name, the Prince ——, only son of a very rich individual; although this son spends double his income, and treats his mind and body as he does his fortune. The tavern is his empire: it is there that he reigns eighteen hours out of the twenty-four; on that ignoble theatre he displays, naturally and involuntarily, noble and elegant manners; his countenance is intellectual and extremely fascinating; his disposition is at once amiable and mischievous: many traits of rare liberality, and even of touching sensibility, are recounted of him.

Having had for his tutor a man of great talent, an old French abbé and *emigré*, he is remarkably well informed; his mind is quick and endowed with great capacity; his wit is unequalled in Moscow, but his language and conduct are such as would not be tolerated elsewhere; his charming but restless face betrays the contradiction that exists between his natural character and his course of life.

Profligacy has impressed upon his countenance the traces of a premature decay; still these ravages of folly, not of time, have been unable to change the almost infantile expression of his noble and regular features. Innate grace will last with life, and remains

faithful to the man who possesses it, whatever effort he may make to throw it off. In no other land could a man be found like the young Prince ——, but there are more than one such here.

He is to be seen surrounded by a crowd of young men, his disciples and competitors, who, without equalling him either in disposition or in mind, all share with him a kind of family resemblance: it may be seen at the first glance that they are, and only can be Russians. It is for this reason that I am about to give some details connected with their manner of life. . . . . But already my pen falls from my hands; for it will be necessary to reveal the connection of these libertines, not with women of the town, but with the youthful sisters of religious orders,—with nuns, whose cloisters, as it will be seen, are not very securely guarded. I hesitate to recite facts which will too readily recal our revolutionary literature in 1793. I shall remind the reader of the Visitandines; — and why, he will ask, lift a corner of the veil that covers scenes of disorder which ought to remain carefully covered? Perhaps my passion for the truth obscures my judgment; but it seems to me that evil triumphs so long as it remains secret, whilst to publish it is to aid in destroying it; besides, I have resolved to draw a picture of this country as I see it, — not a composition, but an exact and complete copy from nature. My business is to represent things as they are, not as they ought to be. The only law that I impose on myself, under a sense of delicacy, is to forbear making any allusion to persons who desire to remain unknown. As for the man whom I select for a specimen of the most unbridled

among the libertines of Moscow, he carries his contempt of opinion to the extent of desiring me to describe him as I see him. In citing several facts related by himself, I have first heard them confirmed by others.

A story of the death of a young man, killed in the convent of ——, by the nuns themselves, he told me yesterday at a full table-d'hôte, before several grave and elderly personages, employés and placemen, who listened with an extraordinary patience to this and several other tales of a similar kind, all very contrary to good manners.

I have surnamed this singular young man, Prince ——, the Don Juan of the Old Testament, so greatly does the measure of his madness and audacity exceed the ordinary bounds of an abandoned life among modern nations. Nothing is little or moderate in Russia: if the land is not, as my Italian cicerone calls it, a land of miracles, it is truly a land of giants.

The story in question related to a young man, who, after having passed an entire month concealed within the convent of ——, began, at last, to weary of his excess of happiness to a degree that wearied the holy sisters also. He appeared dying: whereupon the nuns, wishing to be rid of him, but fearing the scandal that might ensue should they send him to die in the world, concluded that it would be better to make an end of him themselves. No sooner said than done: — the mangled remains of the wretched being were found a few days after at the bottom of a well. The affair was hushed up.

If we are to believe the same authorities, there are numerous convents in Moscow in which the rules of

the cloister are little observed. One of the friends of the prince, yesterday exhibited before me, to the whole legion of libertines, the rosary of a novice, that he said she had forgotten and left that very morning in his chamber. Another made a trophy of a Book of Prayers, which he stated had belonged to one of the sisters who was reputed among the most holy of the community of ——; and the audience warmly applauded.

I shall not go on. Each had his scandalous anecdote to relate, and all excited loud peals of laughter. Gaiety, ever increasing, soon became drunken riot under the influence of the wine of Aï, which overflowed in goblets, whose size was more capable of satisfying Muscovite intemperance than our old-fashioned champagne-glasses. In the midst of the general disorder, the young Prince —— and myself alone preserved our reason, — he, because he can outdrink everybody, I, because I cannot drink at all, and had therefore abstained from attempting.

In the midst of the uproar, the Lovelace of the Kremlin rose with a solemn air, and, with the authority which his fortune, his name, his handsome face, and yet more, his superior mental capacity give him, he commanded silence, and to my great surprise obtained it. I could have fancied I was reading the poetical description of a tempest appeased by the voice of some pagan god. The young god proposed to the friends whom the gravity of his aspect had thus suddenly calmed, to indite a petition, addressed to the proper authorities, humbly remonstrating, in the name of the courtesans of Moscow, that the ancient religious institutions of nunneries so completely inter-

fered with and rivalled their *lay community*, in the exercise of their calling, as to render that calling no longer profitable; and therefore respectfully stating that, as the expenses of these poor cyprians were not diminished in the same proportion as their gains, they ventured to hope an equitable consideration of their case would induce the authorities to see fit to deduct from a part of the revenue of the said convents, a pecuniary aid, which had become absolutely necessary, unless it was wished that the religious orders should entirely take the place of the civil recluses. The motion was put and carried with loud acclamations; ink and paper were called for; and the young madman immediately drew up, in very good French, and with magisterial dignity, a document too scandalously burlesque for me to insert here, though I have a copy. It was thrice read by the author before the meeting, with a loud emphatical voice, and was received with the most flattering marks of approbation.

Such was the scene, of which I have perhaps already recounted too much, that I witnessed yesterday in one of the best frequented taverns of Moscow. It was the day after the agreeable dinner-party in the pretty pavilion of ——. In vain is uniformity the law of the state: nature lives on variety, and knows how, at all costs, to obtain her wants.

I have spared the reader many details, and greatly moderated the expression of those which I have inflicted upon him. If I had been more exact, I should not be read. Montaigne, Rabelais, Shakspeare, and many other great describers, would chasten their style if they wrote in our age; how much more care-

fully, then, should they who have not the same right to independence watch over their words and allusions. The prudery of the present day, if not respectable, is at least formidable. Virtue blushes; but hypocrisy loudly exclaims.

The captain of the troop of debauchees, whose head-quarters is the tavern before noticed, is endowed with so singular an elegance, his bearing is so distinguished, his person so agreeable, there is so much good taste even in his follies, so much kindly feeling painted on his countenance, so much nobleness in his manner, and even in his wildest language, that we pity more than we blame him. He rules from a high elevation the companions of his excesses; he has no appearance of being born for bad company; and it is impossible to avoid feeling a deep interest in him, although he is, in great part, responsible for the errors of his imitators. Superiority, even in evil, always exerts its influence.

He had engaged me to-day to accompany him on an excursion into the country, which was to occupy two days. But I have just been to find him in his usual retreat, in order to excuse myself. I pleaded the necessity of hastening my journey to Nijni, and obtained my release. But before leaving him to the course of folly which is dragging him onwards, I must describe the scene that was prepared for me in the court of the tavern, into which they obliged me to descend to view the decampment of this horde of libertines. The farewell was a true bacchanal.

Imagine a dozen young men already more than half drunk, loudly disputing among each other respecting their seats in three calèches, each drawn by four

horses. A group of lookers on, the tavern-keeper at their head, followed by all the servants of the house and stables, admired, envied, and ridiculed—although this last was done under the cloak of much outward reverence; meanwhile the leader of the band, standing up in his open carriage, played his part, and ruled, by voice and gesture, with unaffected gravity. There was placed at his feet a bucket, or rather a large tub, full of champagne-bottles in ice. This species of portable cellar was the provision for the journey,—to refresh his throat, as he said, when the dust of the road was troublesome. One of his adjutants, whom he called the general of the corks, had already opened two or three bottles; and the young madman was dispensing huge goblets of the costly wine, the best champagne to be had in Moscow, to the bystanders, as a parting libation. Two cups, quickly emptied and incessantly replenished by his most zealous satellite, the general of the corks, were in his hands. He drank one, and offered the other to the nearest bystander. His servants were all clothed in grand livery, with the exception of the coachman, a young serf whom he had recently brought from his estates. This man was dressed in a most costly manner, far more remarkable in its apparent simplicity than the gold-lace trappings of the other servants. He had on a shirt of precious silken tissue, brought from Persia, and above it a cafetan of the finest cassimere, bordered with beautiful velvet, which, opening at the breast, displayed the shirt, plaited in folds so small as to be scarcely perceptible. The dandies of Petersburg like the youngest and handsomest of their people to be thus dressed on days of ceremony. The rest of

the costume corresponded with this luxury. The boots, of fine Torjeck leather, embroidered with flowers in gold and silver thread, glittered at the feet of the rustic, who seemed dazzled with his own splendour, and was so perfumed that I was almost overcome with the essences exhaled from his hair, beard, and clothes, at the distance of several feet from the carriage.

After having drunk with the whole tavern, the young noble leant towards the man thus decked out, and presented him with a foaming cup, saying, "drink." The poor, gilded mugic was, in his inexperience, at a loss how to act. "Drink, I say," continued his master (this was translated to me), "drink, you rascal; it is not to you I give this champagne, but to your horses, who will not have strength to gallop the whole journey if the coachman is not drunk:" upon which the whole assembly laughed and loudly cheered. The coachman was soon persuaded: he was already in the third bumper when his master gave the signal to start, which he did not do till he had renewed to me, with a charming politeness, his regret at having been unable to persuade me to accompany him on this party of pleasure. He appeared so *distingué*, that, while he spoke, I forgot the place and scene, and fancied myself at Versailles in the time of Louis XIV.

At last he departed for the chateau, where he is to spend three days. These gentlemen call such an excursion a summer *hunt*.

We may easily guess how they relieve themselves in the country from the ennui of town life—by continuing the same thing; by pursuing the same career; by reviving the scenes of Moscow, except, at least,

that they introduce upon them new *figurantes.* They carry with them, in these journeys, cargoes of engravings of the most celebrated pictures of France and Italy, which furnish them with subjects for *tableaux vivants,* which they cause to be represented with certain modifications of costume.

The villages, and all that they contain, are their own; so that it may easily be supposed the privilege of the nobleman in Russia extends further than at the Opera Comique of Paris.

The —— tavern, open to all the world, is situated in one of the public squares of the city, a few steps only from a guard-house full of Cossacks, whose stiff bearing and severely gloomy air would impart to foreigners the idea of a country where no one dares to laugh even innocently.

As I have imposed upon myself the duty of communicating the ideas that I have formed of this land, I am obliged to add to the picture already sketched, a few new specimens of the conversation of the parties already brought before the reader.

One boasted of himself and his brothers being the sons of the footmen and the coachmen of their father; and he drank, and made the guests drink, to the health of all his unknown parents. Another claimed the honour of being brother (on the father's side) of all the waiting-maids of his mother.

Many of these vile boasts are no doubt made for the sake of talking: but to invent such infamies in order to glory in them, shows a corruption of mind that proves wickedness to the very core—wickedness worse even than that exhibited in the mad actions of these libertines.

According to them, the citizens' wives in Moscow are no better than the women of rank.

During the months that their husbands go to the fair of Nijni, the officers of the garrison take special care not to leave the city. This is the season of easy assignations. The ladies are generally accompanied to the place of rendezvous by some *respectable* relation, to whose care their absent husbands have confided them. The good-will and silence of these family duennas have also to be paid for. Gallantry of this kind cannot be excused as a love affair: there is no love without bashful modesty, — such is the sentence pronounced from all eternity against women who cheat themselves of happiness, and who degrade instead of purifying themselves by tenderness. The defenders of the Russians pretend that at Moscow the women have no lovers: I agree with them: some other term must be employed to designate the *friends* whose intimacy they seek in the absence of their husbands.

I repeat that I am disposed to doubt many things of this kind that are told to me; but I cannot doubt that they are related pleasantly and complacently to the first newly-arrived foreigner; and the air of triumph of the narrator seems to say—we also, you see, are civilised!

The more I consider these debauchees' manner of life, the more I wonder at the social position — to use the language of the day—which they here preserve, notwithstanding conduct that in any other land would shut all doors against them. I cannot tell how such notorious offenders are treated in their own families; but I can testify that, in public, every one pays them

peculiar deference: their appearance is the signal for general hilarity; their company is the delight even of elderly men, who do not imitate them, but who certainly encourage them.

In observing the general reception which they receive, I ask myself what a person should here do to lose credit and character.

By a procedure altogether contrary to that observable among free people, whose manners become more puritanical, if not more pure, in proportion as democracy gains ground in the constitution, corruptness is here confounded with liberal institutions; and distinguished men of bad character are admired as is with us a talented opposition or minority. The young Prince —— did not commence his career as a libertine until after finishing a three-years' exile at the Caucasus, where the climate ruined his health. It was immediately after leaving college that he incurred this penalty for having broken the window-panes of some shops in Petersburg. The government, having determined to see a political intention in this harmless riot, has, by its excessive severity, converted a hair-brained youth, while yet a child, into a profligate, lost to his country, his family, and himself.* Such are the aberrations into which despotism — that most immoral of governments — can drive the minds of men.

Here all revolt appears legitimate; revolt even against reason and against God! Where order is oppressive, disorder has its martyrs. A Lovelace, a Don Juan, or yet worse if it were possible, would be

* I have been assured, since my return to France, that he has married, and is living a very orderly life.

viewed as a kind of liberator, merely because he had incurred legal punishments. The blame can only fall on the judge. People here, avow their hatred of morals just as others would elsewhere say, "I detest arbitrary government."

I brought with me to Russia a preconceived opinion, which I possess no longer. I believed, with many others, that autocracy derived its chief strength from the equality which it caused to reign beneath it. But this equality is an illusion. I said, and heard it said, that when one man is all-powerful, the others are all equal, that is, all equally nullities; which equality, if not a happiness, is a consolation. The argument was too logical to prove practically true. There is no such thing as absolute power in the world; there are arbitrary and capricious powers; but, however outrageous they may become, they are never heavy enough to establish perfect equality among their subjects.

The Emperor Nicholas can do every thing. But if he often did all that he could do, he would not retain this power very long. So long, therefore, as he forbears, the condition of the nobleman is very different from that of the mugic or the tradesman whom he ruins. I maintain that there is at this day, in Russia, more real inequality in the conditions of men than in any other European land.

The circumstances of human societies are too complicated to be submitted to the rigour of mathematical calculation. I can see reigning under the Emperor, among the castes which constitute his empire, hatreds which have their source solely in the abuses of secondary power.

In general, the men here use a very soft and specious language. They will tell you with the most benign air that the Russian serfs are the happiest peasants upon earth. Do not listen to them, they deceive you: many families of serfs in distant cantons suffer even from hunger; many perish under poverty and ill treatment. In every class in Russia, humanity suffers; and the men who are sold with the land suffer more than the others. It will be pretended that they are protected by a legal right to the necessaries of life; such right is but a mockery for those who have no means of enforcing it.

It will be further said that it is the interest of the nobles to relieve the wants of their peasants. But does every man always understand his interests? Among us, those who act foolishly lose their fortunes, and there is the end of it: but here, as the fortune of man consists in the life of a number of men, he who mismanages his property may cause whole villages to perish of famine. The government, when attracted by too glaring excesses, sometimes puts the unprincipled nobleman under guardianship; but this ever-tardy step does not restore the dead. The mass of sufferings and unknown iniquities that must be produced by such manners, under such a constitution, with so great distances and so dreadful a climate, may be easily imagined. It is difficult to breathe freely in Russia when we think of all these miseries.

The nobleman has, in the government of his estates, the same difficulties to contend with as regards the distances of places, the ignorance of facts, the influence of customs, and the intrigues of subalterns, that the emperor has in his wider sphere of action; but

the nobleman has, in addition, temptations that are more difficult to resist; for, being less exposed to public view, he is less controlled by public opinion and by the eye of Europe. From this firmly-established order, or rather disorder of things, there result inequalities, caprices, and injustices, unknown to societies where the law alone can change the relations of society.

It is not correct, then, to say that the force of despotism lies in the equality of its victims; it lies only in the ignorance of liberty and in the fear of tyranny. The power of an absolute master is a monster ever ready to give birth to a yet greater — the tyranny of the people.

It is true that democratic anarchy never lasts; whilst the regularity produced by the abuses of autocracy are perpetuated from generation to generation.

Military discipline, applied to the government of a state, is the powerful means of oppression, which constitutes, far more than the fiction of equality, the absolute power of the Russian sovereign. But this formidable force will sometimes turn against those who employ it. Such are the evils which incessantly menace Russia, — popular anarchy carried to its most frightful excess, if the nation revolt, and the prolongation of tyranny, applied with more or less rigour according to times and circumstances, if she continue in her obedience.

Duly to appreciate the difficulties in the political position of this country, we must not forget that the more ignorant the people are, and the longer they have been patient, the more likely is their vengeance to be dreadful. A government which wields power

by maintaining ignorance, is more terrible than stable: a feeling of uneasiness in the nation—a degraded brutality in the army—terror around the administration, a terror shared even by those who govern—servility in the church—hypocrisy in the nobility—ignorance and misery among the people—and Siberia for them all: such is the land as it has been made by necessity, history, nature, and a Providence ever impenetrable in its designs.

And it is with so decayed a body that this giant, scarcely yet emerged out of Asia, endeavours now to influence by his weight, the balance of European policy, and strives to rule in the councils of the West, without taking into account the progress that European diplomacy has made in sincerity during the last thirty years.

At Petersburg, to lie is still to perform the part of a good citizen; to speak the truth, even in apparently unimportant matters, is to conspire. You would lose the favour of the emperor, if you were to observe that he had a cold in his head. *

But once for all, what is it that can have induced this badly-armed colossus to come to fight, or at least to struggle, in the arena of ideas with which it does

* While this is going through the press, the *Journal des Débats* is protesting in favour of a Russian who has ventured to print in a pamphlet that the Romanows, less noble than he is, ascended the throne, as all the world knows, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, by means of an election contested with the Troubetzkoi (who were first elected), and against the claims of several other great families. This accession was agreed to in consideration of some liberal forms introduced into the constitution. The world has seen to what these guarantees have brought Russia.

not sympathise — of interests which do not yet exist for it?

Simply the caprice of its masters, and the vain glory of a few travelled noblemen. Unlucky vanity of *parvenus*, which has enticed the government to run blindfold against difficulties that have caused modern communities to recoil backwards, and that have made them regret the time of political wars, the only wars known in former times!

This country is the martyr of an ambition which it scarcely understands; and, all wounded as it is, it strives to maintain a calm and imposing air. What a part has its head to sustain! To defend by continual artifices a glory built only upon fictions, or at least, on nothing more than hopes!

True power, beneficent power, has no need of artifices; but what stratagems, what falsehoods, what disguises, have not you Russians to avail yourselves of, to conceal a part of your object, and to procure toleration for the other! You!—the regulators of the destiny of Europe! you! pretend to defend the cause of civilisation among nations super-civilised, when the time is not yet long elapsed since you were yourselves a horde, whose only discipline was terror, and whose commanders were savages! On searching for the cause, we shall find that all these vain aspirations are nothing more than the inevitable consequences of the system of false civilisation adopted by Peter the Great. Russia will feel the effects of that man's pride long after she has ceased to admire his greatness. There are many of her people who already agree with me, without daring to avow it, that he was more extraordinary than heroic.

If the Czar Peter, instead of amusing himself with dressing up bears and monkeys—if Catherine II., instead of meddling with philosophy—if, in short, all the Russian sovereigns had wished to civilise their nation by cautiously cultivating and developing the admirable seed which God had implanted in the hearts of this people—these last comers from Asia—they would have less dazzled Europe, but they would have acquired a more solid and durable glory; and we should now see them pursuing their providential task of making war with the old Asiatic governments. Turkey in Europe herself would have submitted to their influence, without the other states being able to complain of such extension of a power really beneficent. Instead of this irresistible strength, Russia has, among us, the power only that we accord to her—the power of an upstart, more or less skilful in making us forget her origin. The sovereignty over neighbours more barbarous and more slavish than herself is her due and her destiny; it is written, if I may use the expression, in her future chronicles; but her influence over more advanced people is contingent and uncertain.

However, this nation once launched on the great high road of civilisation, nothing will be able to make her return to her own line. God alone knows the result. Peter the Great, it must be remembered, or rather Peter the Impatient, was the cause of her error. The world will also not forget that the only institutions whence Russian liberty could have sprung—the two chambers—were abolished by that prince.

In politics, arts, sciences, and all other branches of human attainment, men are only great by compa-

rison. It is owing to this that there are some ages and some countries in which people have become great men with very little difficulty. The Czar Peter appeared in one of those epochs and countries; not but that he also had extraordinary energy of character, but his minute mind limited his views.

I leave to-morrow for Nijni. Were I to prolong my stay in Moscow, I should not see this fair, which is drawing to a close. I shall not conclude the present chapter until after my return this evening from Petrowski, where I am going to hear the Russian gypsies.

I have been selecting a room in the hotel, which I shall continue to keep during my absence at Nijni; having made it a hiding-place for my papers: for I dare not venture on the road to Kazan with all that I have written since I left Petersburg; and I know no one here to whom I should like to confide these dangerous chapters. Exactness in the recital of facts, independence in the judgments formed, truth, in short, is more suspicious than anything else in Russia: it is truth which peoples Siberia, not, however, to the exclusion of robbery and murder, an association which frightfully aggravates the fate of political offenders.

I have returned from Petrowski, where I saw the dancing-saloon, which is beautiful; it is called, I believe, the Vauxhall. Before the opening of the ball, which appeared to me a dull affair, I was taken to hear the Russian gypsies. Their wild and impassioned song has some distant resemblance to that of the Spanish gitanos. The melodies of the north are

less lively, less voluptuous, than those of Andalusia, but they produce a more profoundly pensive impression. There are some which mean to be gay, but they are more melancholy than the others. The gypsies of Moscow sing, without instruments, pieces which possess originality; but when the meaning of the words that accompany this expressive and national music is not understood, much of the effect is lost.

Duprez has disgusted me with songs which convey ideas by sound only. His manner of intonating the music and accenting the words carries expression to the utmost verge that it is capable of reaching: the power of feeling is thus multiplied a hundredfold, and thought, borne on the wings of melody, soars to the farthest limits of human sensibility, which takes its spring in the confines where mind and body blend. Things that speak to mind only do not soar so far. Such is the achievement of Duprez in the field of poetical song: he has realised lyric tragedy, long so vainly sought in France by incompetent talents. To have thus succeeded in revolutionising the art, it was needful that the artist should know his profession better than did any other. Admiration of such a marvel inclines us to be hard to please, and often unjust as regards others. To neglect the power of words as a means of musical expression, is to reject the true poetry of vocal music; it is to confine the power, whose full capabilities had not been completely and systematically revealed to the French public until Duprez restored Guillaume Tell. These are the facts that procure for that great artist his place in the history of art.

The new school of Italian singing, of which Ronconi is now the head, is also reviving the powerful effect of ancient music by the expressive auxiliary of words; but it is still Duprez who has, since his brilliant *débuts* on the Naples' theatre, contributed to this return, for he pursues his work through all languages, and carries his conquests among all people. The women who took the higher parts in the songs of the gypsies have Oriental faces; their eyes possess a brightness and vivacity that is very unusual. The youngest among them appeared to me very beautiful; the others, with their deep, though premature wrinkles, their darkly-stained complexions, and their black hair, would also serve as models for painters. They express in their various melodies many different sentiments; the passion of anger they especially depict with admirable effect. I am told that the troop of gypsy singers that I shall find at Nijni is the most celebrated in Russia. Meanwhile, to render justice to these itinerant virtuosi, I can say that those of Moscow have given me much enjoyment, especially when they sung, in chorus, pieces, the harmony of which appeared to me scientific and complicated.

I found the national opera a detestable exhibition, though represented in a very handsome hall. The piece was *The God and the Bayadère*, translated into Russian! What is the use of employing the language of the country further to disfigure a Parisian *libretto*?

There is also at Moscow a French theatre, where M. Hervet, whose mother had a name in Paris, plays the parts of Bouffé very naturally. I saw *Michel Perrin*

given by this actor with a simplicity and a gusto which greatly pleased me, notwithstanding my recollections of the *Gymnase.* When a piece is really *spirituelle,* there are several styles of performing it. The works which are lost in foreign lands are those in which the author depends upon the actor for the spirit of his character; and this has not been done by Messieurs Mélesville and Duveyrier in the *Michel Perrin* of Madame de Bawr. I am ignorant how far the Russians understand our theatre: I do not put much faith in the pleasure which they assume the appearance of feeling on seeing the representations of French comedies; they have so fine a tact that they guess the fashion before it is proclaimed to them; this spares them the humiliation of owning that they follow it. The delicacy of their ear, and the varied inflections of the vowels, the multiplicity of the consonants, the numerous hissing sounds in which they are exercised in speaking their own tongue, accustom them from infancy to master all the difficulties of pronunciation. Those, even, who only know a few words of French, pronounce them as we do. This often deceives us: we imagine that they understand our language as well as they speak it, which is a great error. The small number who have travelled, or have been born in a rank where education is necessarily carefully directed, alone understand the niceties of Parisian intellectual conversation. Our delicate strokes of wit are lost on the mass. We distrust other foreigners, because their accent of our language is disagreeable, and appears to us ridiculous; and yet, notwithstanding the labour with which they speak it, they understand us better and less superficially than

the Russians, whose soft and imperceptible *cantilène* at first deceives us. As soon as they begin to talk carelessly, to relate a story, or to minutely describe a personal impression, the illusion ceases and the deception is discovered. But they are the cleverest people in the world for concealing their deficiencies: in intimate society this diplomatic talent is wearisome.

A Russian showed me yesterday, in his cabinet, a little portable library, which struck me as a model of good taste. I approached the collection to open a volume the appearance of which had attracted me; it was an Arabic manuscript, bound in old parchment. "You are greatly to be envied; you understand Arabic?" I said to the master of the house. "No," he answered; "but I always have every kind of book around me: it sets off a room, you know."

Scarcely had this ingenuous confession escaped him than the involuntary expression of my face caused him to perceive that he had forgotten himself; whereupon, feeling very sure of my ignorance, he set about translating to me a few pretended passages of the manuscript, and did it with a volubility, a fluency, and an address, which would have deceived me, had not his previous dissimulation, and the embarrassment which he betrayed on my first perceiving it, put me on my guard. I clearly saw that he wished to obliterate the effect of his frank avowal, and to impress me with the idea, without his *actually stating it*, that in making such confession he had only been joking. The artifice, skilful as it was, failed in its object.

These are the childish stratagems of a people whose

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restless self-love urges them to a rivalry with the civilisation of more ancient nations.

There is no kind of artifice or falsehood of which their devouring vanity is not capable, in the hope that we shall be induced to say, on returning to our several countries, "It is a great mistake to call those people the barbarians of the north." This appellation is never out of their heads; they remind strangers of it on every occasion with an ironical humility; and they do not perceive that their very susceptibility on the point furnishes their detractors with arms against them.

I have hired one of the carriages of the country to travel in to Nijni, in order to save my own: but this species of *tarandasse* on springs* is scarcely more substantial than my calèche. This was the remark of a person who has just been to aid me in expediting my departure. "You alarm me," I replied; "for I am tired of breaking down at every stage."

"For a long journey I should advise you to get another, if, at least, one could be found in Moscow at the present season: but the trip is so short that this will serve your purpose."

This short trip, including the return, and the detour that I propose making by Troïtza and Yarowslaw, is one of four hundred leagues, of which I am told 150 are detestable roads, with logs and stumps of trees buried in the mud, deep sands full of loose stones, &c. &c. By the manner in which the Russians

* The real tarandasse is the body of a calèche placed, without springs, on two shafts, which join together the axletrees of the front and hind wheels.

speak of distances, it is easy to perceive they inhabit a land large as Europe, and of which Siberia is a part.

One of the most attractive traits in their character, at least in my opinion, is their dislike to objections: they will recognise neither difficulties nor obstacles.

The common people participate in this, it may be, a little gasconading humour, of the nobility. With his hatchet, which he never lays aside, a Russian peasant triumphs over accidents and predicaments that would altogether stop the villagers of our provinces; and he answers "yes," to everything that is demanded of him.

CHAP. XXX*.

ROADS IN THE INTERIOR. — FARMS AND COUNTRY MANSIONS. — MONOTONY THE GREAT CHARACTERISTIC OF THE LAND. — PASTORAL LIFE OF THE PEASANTS. — BEAUTY OF THE WOMEN AND OLD MEN. — POLICY ATTRIBUTED TO THE POLES. — A NIGHT AT THE CONVENT OF TROÏTZA. — PESTALOZZI ON PERSONAL CLEANLINESS. — INTERIOR OF THE CONVENT. — PILGRIMS. — SAINT SERGIUS. — HISTORY OF THE CONVENT. — ITS TOMBS AND TREASURES. — INCONVENIENCES OF A JOURNEY IN RUSSIA. — BAD QUALITY OF THE WATER. — WANT OF PROBITY A NATIONAL CHARACTERISTIC.

If we are to believe the Russians, all their roads are good during the summer season, even those that are not the great highways. I find them all bad. A road full of inequalities, sometimes as broad as a field, sometimes extremely narrow, passes through beds of sand in which the horses plunge above their knees, lose their wind, break their traces, and refuse to draw at every twenty yards; if these are passed, you soon plunge into pools of mud which conceal large stones and enormous stumps of trees, that are very destructive to the carriages. Such are the roads of this country, except during seasons when they become absolutely impassable, when the extreme of cold renders travelling dangerous, when storms of snow bury the country, or when floods, produced

* Written at the convent of Troïtza, twenty leagues from Moscow, 17th of August.

by the thaw, transform, for about three months in the year, the low plains into lakes; namely for about six weeks after summer, and for as many after the winter season; the rest of the year they continue marshes. The landscape remains the same. The villages still present the same double line of small wood houses, more or less ornamented with painted carvings, with their gable always facing the street, and flanked with a kind of enclosed court, or large shed open on one side. The country still continues the same monotonous though undulating plain, sometimes marshy, sometimes sandy; a few fields, wide pasture-ranges bounded by forests of fir, now at a distance, now close upon the road, sometimes well grown, more frequently scattered and stunted: such is the aspect of all those vast regions. Here and there is to be seen a country-house, or large and mansion-like farm, to which an avenue of birch-trees forms the approach. These are the manor-houses, or residences of the proprietors of the land; and the traveller welcomes them on the road as he would an oasis in the desert.

In some provinces the cottages are built of clay; in which case their appearance is more miserable, though still similar in general character: but from one end of the empire to the other, the greater number of the rustic dwellings are constructed of long and thick beams, carelessly hewn, but carefully caulked with moss and resin. The Crimea, a country altogether southern, is an exception; but, as compared to the whole empire, this country is but a point lost in immensity.

Monotony is the divinity of Russia; yet even this

monotony has a certain charm for minds capable of enjoying solitude: the silence is profound in these unvarying scenes; and sometimes it becomes sublime on a desert plain, whose only boundaries are those of our power of vision.

The distant forest, it is true, presents no variety; it is not beautiful: but who can fathom it? When we remember that its only boundary is the wall of China, we feel a kind of reverence. Nature, like music, draws a part of her potent charm from repetitions. Singular mystery!—by means of uniformity she multiplies impressions. In seeking for too much novelty and variety there is danger of finding only the insipid and the clumsy, as may be seen in the case of modern musicians devoid of genius; but on the contrary, when the artist braves the danger of simplicity, art becomes as sublime as nature. The classic style—I use the word in its ancient acceptation—had little variety.

Pastoral life has always a peculiar charm. Its calm and regular occupations accord with the primitive character of men, and for a long time preserve the youth of races. The herdsmen, who never leave their native districts, are unquestionably the least unhappy of the Russians. Their beauty alone, which becomes more striking as I approach the government of Yarowslaw, speaks well of their mode of life.

I have met—which is a novelty to me in Russia—several extremely pretty peasant-girls, with golden hair, excessively delicate and scarcely coloured complexions, and eyes, which though of a light blue, are expressive, owing to their Asiatic form and their languishing glances. If these young virgins, with fea-

tures similar to those of Greek madonnas, had the *tournure* and the vivacity of movement observable in the Spanish women, they would be the most seductive creatures upon earth. Many of the females in this district are handsomely dressed. They wear over the petticoat a little habit or pelisse bordered with fur, which reaches to the knee, sits well to the shape, and imparts a grace to the whole person.

In no country have I seen so many beautiful bald heads and silver hairs as in this part of Russia. The heads of Jehovah, those chef-d'œuvres of the first pupil of Leonardo da Vinci, are not such entirely ideal conceptions as I imagined when I admired the frescoes of Luini at Lainate, Lugano, and Milan. These heads may be here recognised, living. Seated in the thresholds of their cabins, I have beheld old men, with fresh complexions, unwrinkled cheeks, blue and sparkling eyes, calm countenances, and silver beards glistening in the sun round mouths the peaceful and benevolent smile of which they heighten, who appear like so many protecting deities placed at the entrance of the villages. The traveller, as he passes, is saluted by these noble figures, majestically seated on the earth which saw them born. Truly antique statues, emblems of hospitality which a Pagan would have worshipped, and which Christians must admire with an involuntary respect: for in old age beauty is no longer physical; it is the depicted triumph of the soul after victory.

We must go among the Russian peasants to find the pure image of patriarchal society; and to thank God for the happy existence he has dispensed, notwithstanding the faults of governments, to these in-

offensive beings, whose birth and death are only separated by a long series of years of innocence.

May the angel or demon of industry and of modern enlightened views, pardon me!—but I cannot help finding a great charm in ignorance, when I see its fruits in the celestial countenances of the old Russian peasants.

The modern patriarchs, labourers whose work is no longer a compulsory task, seat themselves, with dignity, towards the close of the day, in the threshold of the cottage which they themselves have, perhaps, rebuilt several times; for under this severe climate the house of man does not last so long as his life. Were I to carry back from my Russian journey no other recollection than that of these old men, with quiet consciences legible on their faces, leaning against doors that want no bolt, I should not regret the trouble I had taken to come and gaze upon beings so different from any other peasants in the world. The majesty of the cottage will always inspire me with profound respect.

Every fixed government, however bad it may be in some respects, has its good results; and every governed people have something wherewith to console themselves for the sacrifices they make to social life.

And yet, at the bottom of this calm which I so much admire, and which I feel so contagious, what disorder! what violence! what false security!

I had written thus much, when an individual of my acquaintance, in whose words I place confidence, having left Moscow a few hours after me, arrived at Troïtza, and, knowing that I was going to pass the

night here, asked to see me while his horses were changing: he confirmed to me news that I had already heard, of eighty villages having been just burnt, in the government of Sembirsk, in consequence of the revolt of the peasants. The Russians attribute these troubles to the intrigues of the Poles. "What interest have the Poles in burning Russia?" I asked the person who related to me the fact. "None," he replied, "unless it be that they hope to draw upon themselves the wrath of the Russian government: their only fear is that they should be left in peace."

"You call to my recollection," I observed, "the band of incendiaries who, at the commencement of our first revolution, accused the aristocrats of burning their own chateaux." "You will not believe me," replied the Russian, "but I know, by close observation and by experience, that every time the Poles observe the emperor inclining towards clemency, they form new plots, send among us disguised emissaries, and even feign conspiracies when they cannot excite real ones; all of which they do solely with a view of drawing upon their country the hate of Russia, and of provoking new sentences for themselves and their countrymen: in fact, they dread nothing so much as pardon, because the gentleness of the Russian government would change the feelings of their peasants, who would soon be induced even to love the *enemy*."

"This appears to me heroical machiavelism," I replied, "but I cannot believe in it. If it be true, why do you not pardon them in order to punish them? You would be then more adroit, as you are already more powerful, than they. But you hate them: and I am much inclined to believe that to

justify your rancour, you accuse the victims, and search, in every misfortune that happens to them, some pretext for laying your yoke more heavily upon adversaries whose ancient glory is an unpardonable crime; the more so, as it must be owned that Polish glory was not very modest."

"Not a wit more so than French glory," maliciously responded my friend, whom I had known in Paris: "but you judge unfairly of our policy, because you neither understand the Russians nor the Poles."

"This is always the burden of your countrymen's song whenever any one ventures to tell them unpleasant truths. The Poles are easily known; they are always talking: I can trust in boasters better than in those who say nothing but what we do not care to know."

"You must, however, have a good deal of confidence in me!"

"In you, personally, I have: but when I recollect that you are a Russian, even though I have known you ten years, I reproach myself with my imprudence —I mean my candour."

"I foresee that you will give a bad account of us, on your return home."

"If I write, I perhaps may; but, as you say, I do not know the Russians, and I shall take care not to speak at random of so impenetrable a nation."

"That will be the best course for you to pursue."

"No doubt: but do not forget, that when once known to dissimulate, the most reserved men are appreciated as if already unmasked."

"You are too satirical and discriminating for barbarians such as we."

Whereupon my old friend re-entered his carriage, and went off at full gallop.

I have already spoken of the care I take to conceal my papers, under a sense of the possibility of some secret, if not open means of discovering my thoughts being had recourse to. I place none of these papers in my écritoire or portfolio; hoping that, in the event of any such perquisitions, this might satisfy the inquisitors. I have, also, so arranged that the feldjäger does not enter my room until having asked my permission through Antonio. An Italian may compete in finesse with even a Russian. The Italian in question has been for fifteen years my valet-de-chambre. He has the politic brain of the modern Romans, and the honourable heart of the ancient. Had I ventured in this land with an ordinary servant, I should have abstained from writing my thoughts; but Antonio, countermining the *espionnage* of the feldjäger, assures to me some degree of safety.

If it be necessary that I should offer excuses for repetition and monotony, it is equally necessary that I should apologise for travelling at all in Russia. The frequent recurrence of the same impressions is inevitable in all conscientious books of travels, and more especially of travels in this land. Wishing to give as exact an idea as possible of the country I survey, it is necessary that I should record precisely, and day by day, all that I am impressed with; this is the only means of justifying my after-reflections.

Troïtza is, after Kiew, the most famous and best frequented place of pilgrimage in Russia. This historical monastery, situated twenty leagues from Moscow, was, I thought, of sufficient interest to allow of my losing a day, and passing a night there, in order to visit the sanctuaries revered by the Russian Christians.

To acquit myself of the task required a strong effort of reason: after such a night as the one I have passed, curiosity becomes extinguished, physical disgust overcomes every other feeling.

I had been assured at Moscow that I should find at Troïtza a very tolerable lodging. In fact the building where strangers are accommodated, a kind of inn belonging to the convent, but situated beyond the sacred precinct, is a spacious structure, and contains chambers apparently very habitable. Nevertheless, I had scarcely retired to rest, when I found all my ordinary precautions inefficient. I had kept a candle burning as usual, and by its light I passed the night in making war with an army of vermin, black and brown, of every form, and, I believe, of every species. The death of one of them seemed to draw on me the vengeance of the whole race, who rushed upon the place where the blood had flowed, and drove me almost to desperation. "They only want wings to make this place hell," was the exclamation which escaped me in my rage. These insects are the legacy of the pilgrims who repair to Troïtza from every part of the empire; they multiply under the shelter of the shrine of St. Sergius, the founder of the famous convent. The benediction of heaven seems to attend their increase which proceeds in this

sacred asylum at a ratio unknown elsewhere. Seeing the legions with which I had to combat I lost all courage: my skin was burning, my blood boiled; I felt myself devoured by imperceptible enemies, and in my agony I fancied that I should prefer fighting an army of tigers rather than this small pest of beggars, and too often of saints; for extreme austerity sometimes marches hand in hand with filthiness,—impious alliance! against which the real friends of God cannot protest sufficiently loudly.

I rose up, and found calm for a moment at the open window; but the scourge followed me—chairs, tables, ceiling, floor, walls, were teeming with life. My valet entered my room before the usual hour; he had suffered the same agonies, and even greater: for not wishing, nor being able to add to the size of our baggage, he has no bed, and places his paillasse on the floor, in preference to the sofas with all their accessories. If I dwell upon these inconveniences, it is because they form a just accompaniment to the boastings of the Russians, and serve to show the degree of civilisation to which the people of this finest part of the empire have attained. On seeing poor Antonio enter the room, his eyes closed up and his face swollen, I had no need of inquiring the cause. Without uttering a word, he exhibited to me a cloak that had been blue the evening before, but was now become brown: after he had placed it on a chair, I perceived that it was moveable: at this sight horror seized us both: air, water, fire, and all the elements were put in requisition; though in such a war victory itself is a loss. At length, purified and dressed, I made a shadow of a breakfast, and repaired to the

convent, where another army of enemies awaited me: but this time, the light cavalry quartered in the folds of the Greek monks' gowns did not inspire me with the slightest fear; I had sustained the assaults of much more formidable combatants. After the battle of the night, the skirmishes of the day appeared to me a mere child's play: to speak without metaphor, the bites of bugs, and the dread of lice, had so hardened me against the attacks of fleas, that I felt no more annoyance from the light clouds of these creatures that played at our feet in the churches of the convent, than I should have felt from the dust of the road. This past night has awakened all my feelings of pity for the unhappy Frenchmen who remained prisoners in Russia after the retreat from Moscow. Vermin, that inevitable product of poverty, is of all physical evils the one which inspires me with the deepest compassion. When I hear it said of a human being, he is in such wretchedness that he is dirty, my heart bleeds. Personal dirtiness is something viler even than it appears. It betrays, to the eyes of an attentive observer, a moral degradation worse than all bodily evils put together. This leprosy, for being to a certain extent voluntary, is only the more loathsome: it is a phenomenon which springs from our two natures; it embraces both the moral and the physical; it is the result of an infirmity of soul as well as of body; it is at once a vice and a malady.

I have often, in my travels, had reason to remember the sagacious observations of Pestalozzi, that great practical philosopher, the preceptor of the working classes before Fourier and the Saint Simonians. According to his observations on the life of the lower

orders, of two men who have the same habits of life, one will be dirty, the other clean. Personal cleanliness has as much to do with the health and the natural habit of body as with the personal habits of the individual. Do we not often see among the better classes people who take great pains with their persons, and who are yet very dirty. Among the Russians there reigns a high degree of sordid negligence: it seems to me they must have trained their vermin to survive the bath.

Notwithstanding my ill-humour, I went carefully over the interior of the patriotic convent of the Trinity. It does not possess the imposing aspect of our old Gothic monasteries. The architecture is not the object that should bring people to a sacred place; but if these famous sanctuaries were worth the trouble of being looked at, they would lose none of their sanctity, nor the pilgrims of their merit.

The convent stands on an eminence, and resembles a town surrounded with strong walls, mounted with battlements. Like those of Moscow, it has gilded spires and cupolas, which, shining in the evening sun, announce to the pilgrims, from afar, the end of their pious journey.

During the fine season, the surrounding roads are crowded with travellers, marching in procession. In the villages, groups of the faithful are to be seen eating and sleeping under the shade of the birch-trees; and at every step a peasant may be met walking in a species of sandal, made of the bark of the lime-tree: a female often accompanies him, who carries his shoes in her hand, whilst with the other she shields herself with an umbrella from the rays of the sun, which the

Muscovites dread in summer more than the inhabitants of the south. A kibitka, drawn by one horse, follows, and contains the sleeping appurtenances, and the utensils with which to prepare tea. The kibitka doubtless resembles the chariot of the ancient Sarmatians. This equipage is constructed with primitive simplicity; it consists of the half of a cask severed lengthways, and placed upon axles, resembling the frame of a cannon.

The countrymen and women, who know how to sleep anywhere except in a bed, travel, stretched at their ease, in these light and picturesque vehicles: sometimes one of the pilgrims, watching over the sleepers, sits with his legs hanging over the edge of the kibitka, and lulls with national songs his dreaming comrades. In these dull and plaintive melodies, the sentiments of regret prevail over those of hope; their expression is melancholy but never impassioned: all is repressed, all betrays prudence in this naturally light and cheerful people, rendered taciturn by education. If I did not view the fate of nations as written in heaven, I should say that the Slavonians were born to people a more generous soil than the one on which they established themselves when they came forth from Asia, that great nursery of nations.

The first oppressor of the Russians was the climate. With every respect for Montesquieu, extreme cold appears to me more favourable to despotism than does heat: the men, the freest perhaps on the face of the earth — are they not the Arabs? The rigours of nature inspire man with rudeness and cruelty.

On leaving the hostelry of the convent I crossed an open square, and entered the monastic walls.

After passing under an alley of trees, I found myself among several little churches, surnamed cathedrals, with high steeples dividing them from each other; while numerous chapels, and ranges of dwellings, wherein are now lodged the disciples of Saint Sergius, were scattered around without design or order.

This famous hermit founded the convent of Troïtza in 1338: its history, as well as that of its founder, is intimately connected with the general history of Russia. In the war against the Khan Mamaï, the holy man aided Dmitry Ivanowitch with his counsels; and the victory of the grateful prince enriched the politic monks. Afterwards, their monastery was destroyed by fresh hordes of Tartars, but the body of St. Sergius, miraculously discovered under the ruins, imparted a fresh renown to this asylum of prayer, which was rebuilt by means of the pious donations of the Czars. In 1609, the Poles besieged the convent for the space of six months. It had become the retreat of the patriotic defenders of the country; and the enemy, unable to take it, was at length obliged to raise the siege, to the additional glory of St. Sergius, and to the great joy and pecuniary advantage of his successors.

The walls are adorned with turrets, and surmounted with a covered gallery, of which I made the circuit. They are nearly half a league in extent. Of all the historical associations which render this place celebrated, the most interesting is that connected with the flight of Peter the Great, saved by his mother from the fury of the Strelitz, who pursued him into the cathedral of the Trinity, even to the altar of

St. Sergius, where the attitude of the hero, ten years of age, disarmed the revolted soldiers.

All the Greek churches resemble each other. The paintings they contain are always Byzantine, that is to say, unnatural, without life and without variety. Sculpture is everywhere wanting; it is replaced by gilded carved work, rich, but not beautiful, and more insipid than magnificent.

All the names of note in Russian history have taken pleasure in enriching the convent, which overflows with gold, pearls, and diamonds. The universe has been placed under contribution to swell the pile of wealth that forms one of the miracles of the place, and which I contemplate with an astonishment more nearly approaching to stupefaction than to admiration. Czars, empresses, nobles, libertines, and true saints, have all vied with each other in enriching the treasury of Troïtza. Amid so many riches, the simple dress and the wooden cup of St. Sergius shine by their very rusticity.

The tomb of the saint in the cathedral of the Trinity blazes with magnificence. The convent would have furnished a rich booty to the French; it has not been taken since the fourteenth century. It contains nine churches. The shrine of the saint is of silver, gilt; it is protected by silver pillars and canopy, the gift of the Empress Anne. The image of Saint Sergius is esteemed miraculous. Peter the Great carried it with him in his wars against Charles XII.

Not far from the shrine, under shelter of the virtues of the hermit, lies the body of the usurping assassin, Boris Godounoff, surrounded by many of

his family. The convent contains various other famous but shapeless tombs: they exhibit at once the infancy and the decrepitude of art. The house of the Archimandrite and the palace of the Czars present nothing of interest. The number of monks is now only one hundred; they were formerly thrice as many. Notwithstanding my persevering request, they would not show me the library. "It is forbidden" was always the answer. This modesty of the monks, who conceal the treasures of science, while they parade those of vanity, strikes me as singular. I argue from it that there is more dust on their books than on their jewels.

I am now at Dernicki, a village between the small town of Periaslavle and Yaroslaf, the capital of the province of the same name.

It must be owned that it is a strange notion of enjoyment which can induce a man to travel for his pleasure in a country where there are no high roads*, according to the application of the word in other parts of Europe,—no inns, no beds, no straw even to sleep upon—for I am obliged to fill my mattress and that of my servant with hay,—no white bread, no wine, no drinkable water, not a landscape to gaze upon in the country,—not a work of art to study in the towns; where, in winter, the cheeks, nose, ears, and feet are in great danger of being frozen; where, in the dog-days, you broil under the

* With the exception of the road between Petersburg and Moscow, and part of that between Petersburg and Riga.

sun, and shiver at night. Such are the amusements I am come to seek in the heart of Russia.

The water is unwholesome in nearly every part of the country. You will injure your health if you trust to the protestations of the inhabitants, or do not drink it without correcting it by effervescent powders. To be sure, you may obtain the luxury of Seltzer-water in the large towns; but the necessity of laying in stores of this foreign beverage, as provision for the road, is very inconvenient. The wine of the taverns, generally white, and christened with the name of Sauterne, is scarce, dear, and of bad quality.

As for the scenery, there appears so little variety, that, as regards the habitations which alone enliven it, it may be said that there is but one village in all Russia. The distances are incommensurable, but the Russians diminish them by their rate of travelling: scarcely leaving their carriage until arrived at the place of their destination, they feel as though they had been in bed at home the whole length of the journey; and are astonished to find that we do not share their taste for this mode of travelling while sleeping, inherited by them from their Scythian ancestors. We must not believe, however, that their course is always equally rapid; these northern Gascons do not tell us of all their delays on the route. The coachmen drive fast when they are able, but they are often stopped by insurmountable difficulties.

Even on the road between Petersburg and Moscow I found that we proceeded at very unequal rates, and that at the end of the journey we had scarcely saved more time than is done in other countries. On other routes the inconveniences are multiplied a hundred-

fold: the horses become scarce, the roads such as would destroy any vehicle; and the traveller asks himself, with a kind of shame, what could have been his motive for imposing upon himself so many discomforts, by coming to a country that has all the wildness, without any of the poetic grandeur of the desert? Such was the question I addressed to myself this evening, when benighted on a road, the difficulty of moving in which was greatly enhanced by a new unfinished chaussée, which crossed it at every fifty yards, and by tottering bridges, which had often lost the pieces of timber the most essential to their security.

My meditations at length determined me to halt, and, to the great annoyance of my coachman and feldjäger, I fixed on a lodging in the little house of some villagers, where I am now writing. This refuge is less disgusting than a real inn: no traveller stops in such a village; and the wood of the cabin serves as a refuge only to the insects brought from the forest. My chamber, a loft reached by a dozen steps, is nine or ten feet square, and six or seven high; it reminds me of the cottage of the imbecile old man in the story of Thelenef. The entire habitation is made of the trunks of fir-trees, caulked with moss and pitch as carefully as if it were a boat. The same eternal smell of tar, cabbage, and perfumed leather, which, combined, pervades every Russian village, annoys me; but I prefer headache to mental distress, and find this bed-chamber far more comfortable than the large plastered hall of the inn at Troïtza. I have fixed in it my iron bedstead: the peasants sleep, wrapped in their sheep-skins, on the seats ranged round the room on the ground-floor.

Antonio makes his bed in the coach, which is guarded by him and the feldjäger. Men are pretty safe on Russian highways, but equipages and all their appurtenances are viewed as lawful prizes by the Slavonian serfs; and, without extreme vigilance, I should find my calèche in the morning, stript of cover, braces, curtains, and apron; in short, transformed into a primitive tarandasse, a real telega; and not a soul in the village who would have any idea what had become of the leather: or if, by means of rigid searches, it should be found at the bottom of some shed, the thief, by stating that he had found it and brought it there, would be acquitted. This is the standing defence in Russia: theft is rooted in the habits of the people, and consequently the robber preserves an easy conscience and a serene face that would deceive the very angels. "Our Saviour would have stolen," they say, "if his hands had not been pierced." This is one of their most common adages.

Nor is robbery the vice alone of the peasants: there are as many kinds of theft as there are orders in society. The governor of a province knows that he is constantly in danger of something occurring that may send him to finish his days in Siberia. If, during the time that he continues in office, he has the cleverness to steal enough to defend himself in the legal process which would precede his exile, he may get out of the difficulty; but if he continue poor and honest he must be ruined. This is not my remark, but that of several Russians whom I may not name, but whom I believe to be worthy of faith.

The commissaries of the army rob the soldiers, and enrich themselves by starving them: in short,

an honest administration would be here both dangerous and ridiculous.

I hope to-morrow to reach Yaroslaf: it is a central city; and I shall stop there a day or two in order to discover, in the interior of the country, real original Russians. I took care, with this intention, to procure several letters of introduction to that capital of one of the most interesting and important provinces of the empire.

CHAP. XXXI.

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE OF YAROSLAF.—A RUSSIAN'S OPINION OF RUSSIAN ARCHITECTURE.—DESCRIPTION OF YAROSLAF.—MONOTONOUS ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY.—THE BOATMEN OF THE VOLGA.—COUP-D'ŒIL ON THE RUSSIAN CHARACTER.—PRIMITIVE DROWSKAS.—ANTIQUE COSTUME.—RUSSIAN BATHS.—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RUSSIAN AND GERMAN CHILDREN.—VISIT TO THE GOVERNOR.—AN AGREEABLE SURPRISE.—SOUVENIRS OF VERSAILLES.—INFLUENCE OF FRENCH LITERATURE.—VISIT TO THE CONVENT OF THE TRANSFIGURATION.—RUSSIAN PIETY.—BYZANTINE STYLE IN THE ARTS.—GREAT POINTS OF RELIGIOUS DISCUSSION IN RUSSIA.—THE ZACUSKA.—THE STERLED.—RUSSIAN DINNERS.—FAMILY SOIRÉE.—MORAL SUPERIORITY OF THE FEMALE SEX IN RUSSIA.—JUSTIFICATION OF PROVIDENCE.—A LOTTERY.—FRENCH TON CHANGED BY POLITICS.—WANT OF A BENEFICENT ARISTOCRACY.—THE REAL GOVERNORS OF RUSSIA.—BUREAUCRACY.—CHILDREN OF THE POPES.—PROPAGANDISM OF NAPOLEON STILL OPERATES IN RUSSIA.—THE TASK OF THE EMPEROR.

THE prediction made to me at Moscow is already accomplished, although I have yet scarcely completed a quarter of my journey. I have reached Yaroslaf in a carriage, not one part of which is undamaged. It is to be mended, but I doubt whether it will carry me through.

Summer has now vanished*, not to return until the next year. A cold rain, which they here consider as proper to the season, has driven away the dog-days entirely. I am so accustomed to the incon-

* Written 18th of August.

veniences of the heat, to dust, flies, and musquitos, that I can scarcely realise the idea of my deliverance from these scourges.

The city of Yaroslaf is an important entrepôt for the interior commerce of Russia. By it, Petersburg communicates with Persia, the Caspian, and all Asia. The Volga, that great national and moving road, flows by the city, which is the central point of the interior navigation of the country—a navigation wisely directed, much boasted of by the subjects of the Czar, and one of the principal sources of their prosperity. It is with the Volga that the immense ramifications of canals are connected, that create the wealth of Russia.

The city, like all the other provincial cities in the empire, is vast in extent, and appears empty. The streets are immensely broad, the squares very spacious, and the houses in general stand far apart. The same style of architecture reigns from one end of the country to the other. The following dialogue will show the value the Russians place on their pretended classic edifices.

A man of intelligence said to me, at Moscow, that he had seen nothing in Italy which appeared new to him.

"Do you speak seriously?" I asked.

"Quite seriously," he replied.

"It seems to me impossible," I responded, "that any one could descend for the first time the southern side of the Alps, without the aspect of the land producing a revolution in his mind."

"In what manner?" said the Russian, with that

disdainful tone and air which here too often pass for a proof of civilisation.

"What!" I replied, "the novelty of those landscapes adorned by art, those hills and slopes, where palaces, convents, and villages stand surrounded with vines, mulberries, and olives; those long ranges of white pillars, which support festoons of vines, and which carry the wonders of architecture into the recesses of the steepest mountains,—all that magnificent scenery, which gives the idea of a park laid out by Lenôtre for the pleasure of princes, rather than of a land cultivated in order to yield the labourer his daily bread; all those creations of man applied to embellish the creations of God,—is it possible that they did not appear to you as something new? Surely, elegantly designed churches, in the steeples of which we recognise a classic taste modified by feudal customs, with so many other stately and extraordinary buildings dispersed in that superb garden, must have caused you some surprise! Roads carried over enormous passes, on arcades as solid as they appear light to the eye*, mountains serving as the base of convents, villages, and palaces,—all announce a land where nature owns art as her sovereign. Woe to him who could tread the soil of Italy, without recognising in the majesty of the sites, as in that of the edifices, the land that is the cradle of civilisation!"

"I congratulate myself," replied my opponent, ironically, "on having seen nothing of all this, as my blindness will serve as an excuse for your eloquence."

* Witness the town of Bergamo, the lakes Maggiore, Como, &c., and all the southern valleys of the Alps.

"I shall not much care," I answered, coolly, "though my enthusiasm appears to you ridiculous, if I only succeed in awakening in you a sentiment of the beautiful. The choice of the sites alone of the edifices, villages, and towns of Italy, reveals to me the genius of a people born for the arts. In the localities where commerce has accumulated wealth, as at Genoa, Venice, and the feet of all the great passes of the Alps, what use have the inhabitants made of the treasures they amassed? They have bordered their seas, lakes, rivers, and precipices with enchanted palaces,—ramparts of marble raised by genii. It is not alone on the borders of the Brenta that these miracles are to be seen; every mountain has its prodigy. Towns and villages, churches, castles, convents, bridges, villas, hermitages, the retreats of penitence as well as the abodes of pleasure and luxury, all so strike the imagination of the traveller as to weave a spell over the mind as well as the eye. The grandeur of the masses, the harmony of the lines are new to the men of the north. Add to this the associations of history.—Greece herself, notwithstanding her sublime but too scarce relics, less astonishes the greater number of pilgrims; for the ages of barbarism have left Greece empty, and the land requires to be searched in order to be appreciated. Italy, on the contrary, needs only to be looked at—"

"How," interrupted the impatient Russian,—"how can you expect us inhabitants of Petersburg and Moscow to be astonished, as you are, with Italian architecture? Do you not see models of it at every step you take in even the smallest of our towns and cities?"

This explosion of national vanity silenced me: I was at Moscow; an inclination to laugh was rising within me, but it would have been dangerous to have given way to it. The argument of my adversary was the same as though a person were to refuse to look upon the Apollo Belvidere because he had elsewhere seen plaster-of-Paris casts of it. The influence of the Mongols survives their conquests among the Russians. Was it, then, to imitate them that they drove them out? Detractors make little progress, either in the arts or in general civilisation. The Russians observe with malevolence because they lack the perception of perfection: so long as they envy their models they will never equal them. Their empire is immense, but what of that: who would admire the colossus of an ape?

Such were the angry thoughts that rose in my mind, but of which I suppressed the outward expression, although I believe my disdainful opponent read them on my face, for he did not speak to me any more, unless it was to add, with a nonchalant air, that he had seen olives in the Crimea, and mulberry-trees at Kiew.

For my own part, I congratulate myself that I am only come to Russia for a short time; a long stay in this land might rob me not only of the courage, but of the desire, to say the truth, in answer to things that I hear and see. Despotism discourages and casts a spell of indifference even over minds that are the most determined to struggle against its glaring abuses.

Disdain for things that they do not know, appears to me a dominant trait in the character of the Russians.

Instead of endeavouring to comprehend, they endeavour to ridicule. If they ever succeed in bringing to full light their real genius, the world will see, not without some surprise, that it is a genius for caricature. Since I have studied the Russian character, and travelled in this last of the states written in the great book of European history, I have discovered that the talent for ridicule possessed by the *parvenu*, may become the dowry of an entire nation.

The painted and gilded towers, almost as numerous as the houses of Yaroslaf, shine at a distance like those of Moscow, but the city is less picturesque than the old capital of the empire. It is protected on the banks of the Volga by a raised terrace, planted with trees; under it, as under a bridge, the road passes, by which merchandise is carried to and from the river. Notwithstanding its commercial importance, the city is empty, dull, and silent. From the height of the terrace is to be seen the yet more empty, dull, and silent surrounding country, with the immense river, its hue a sombre iron-grey, its banks falling straight upon the water, and forming at their top a level with the leaden tinted plain, here and there dotted with forests of birch and pine. This soil is, however, as well cultivated as it is capable of being; it is boasted of by the Russians as being, with the exception of the Crimea, the richest and most smiling tract in their empire.

Byzantine edifices ought to be the models of the national architecture in Russia. Cities full of structures adapted to their location should animate the banks of the Volga. The interior arrangements of the Russian habitations are rational; their exterior,

and the general plan of the towns, are not so. Yaroslaf has its columns and its triumphal arches in imitation of Petersburg, all of which are in the worst taste, and contrast, in the oddest manner, with the style of the churches and steeples. The nearer I approached this city, the more was I struck with the beauty of the population. The villages are rich and well built: I have seen a few stone houses, though too limited a number to vary the monotony of the view.

The Volga is the Loire of Russia; but instead of the gaily-smiling hills of Touraine, crowned with the fairest castles of the middle ages, we here find only flat, unvaried banks, with plains, where the small, gray, mean-looking houses, ranged in lines like tents, sadden rather than animate the landscape: such is the land that the Russians commend to our admiration.

In walking along the borders of the Volga I had to struggle against the wind of the north, omnipotent in this country throughout the year; for three months of which it sweeps the dust before it, and for the remaining nine, the snow. This evening, in the intervals of the blast, the distant songs of the boatmen upon the river caught my ear. The nasal tones, that so much injure the effect of the national songs of the Russians, were lost in the distance, and I heard only a vague, plaintive strain, of which my heart could guess the words. Upon a long float of timber, which they guided skilfully, several men were descending the course of their native Volga. On reaching Yaroslaf they wished to land: when I saw them moor their raft, I stopped. They passed close before me, without taking any notice of my foreign appear-

ance; without even speaking to each other. The Russian peasants are taciturn and devoid of curiosity; I can understand why: what they know disgusts them with all of which they are ignorant.

I admire their noble features and fine expression. With the exception of the Calmuc race, who have broken noses and high cheek bones, I again repeat, the Russians are perfectly beautiful.

Another charm, natural to them, is the gentleness of their voice, which is always base, and which vibrates without effort. This voice renders euphonious a language, which, spoken by others, would sound harsh and hissing. It is the only one of the European languages which appears to me to lose anything in the mouth of refined and educated persons. My ear prefers the Russian of the streets to the Russian of the drawing-rooms: in the streets, it is a natural tongue; in the *salons*, and at court, it is a newly-imported language, which the policy of the master imposes upon the courtiers.

Melancholy, disguised by irony, is in this land the most ordinary humour of mind; in the saloons especially. There, more than elsewhere, it is necessary to dissimulate sadness; hence the sneering, sarcastic tone of language, and those efforts in conversation, painful both to the speaker and the listener. The common people drown their sadness in silent intoxication; the lords in noisy drunkenness. The same vice assumes a different form in the master and the slave. The former has yet another resource against ennui — ambition, that intoxication of the mind. Among all classes there reigns an innate elegance, a natural refinement, which is neither barbarism nor

civilisation; not even their affectation can deprive them of this primitive advantage.

They are, however, deficient in a much more essential quality — the faculty of loving. In ordinary affairs, the Russians want kind heartedness; in great affairs, good faith: a graceful egotism, a polite indifference, are the most conspicuous traits in their intercourse with others. This want of heart prevails among all classes, and betrays itself under various forms, according to the rank of the individuals; but the principal is the same in all. The faculty of being easily affected and tenderly attached, so rare among the Russians, is a ruling characteristic of the Germans, who call it *gemüth*. We should call it expansive sensibility, or cordiality, if we had any need of defining a feeling which is scarcely more common among us than among the Russians. But the refined and ingenuous French *plaisanterie* is here replaced by a malignantly prying, a hostile, closely observing, caustic, satirical, and envious spirit, which appears to me infinitely more objectionable than our jesting frivolity. Here, the rigour of the climate, the severity of the government, and the habit of espionnage, render characters melancholy, and self-love distrustful. Somebody, or something, is always feared; and, what is worse, not without cause. This is not avowed, yet it cannot be concealed from a traveller accustomed to observe and compare different nations.

To a certain point the want of a charitable disposition in the Russians towards strangers appears to me excusable. Before knowing us, they lavish their attentions upon us with apparent eagerness, because they are hospitable like the Orientals; but they are

also easily wearied like the Europeans. In welcoming us with a forwardness which has more ostentation than cordiality, they scrutinize our slightest words, they submit our most insignificant actions to a critical examination; and as such work necessarily furnishes them with much subject for blame, they triumph internally, saying, "These, then, are the people who think themselves so superior to us!"

This kind of study suits their quickly discerning, rather than sensitive nature. Such a disposition neither excludes a certain politeness nor a kind of grace, but it is the very opposite of true amability. Perhaps, with care and time, one might succeed in inspiring them with some confidence; nevertheless, I doubt whether all my efforts could achieve this; for the Russians are the most unimpressible, and, at the same time, the most impenetrable people in the world. What have they done to aid the march of human mind? They have not hitherto produced either philosophers, moralists, legislators, or literati whose names belong to history; but, truly, they have never wanted, and never will want good diplomatists, clever, politic heads; and it is the same with their inferior classes, among whom there are no inventive mechanics, but abundance of excellent workmen.

I am leading the reader into the labyrinth of contradictions, that is, I am showing the things of this world as they have appeared to me at the first and at the second view. I must leave to him the task of so reviewing and arranging my remarks as to be able to draw from them a general opinion. My ambition will be satisfied, if a comparing and selecting from this crowded collection of precipitate and carelessly

hazarded judgments will allow any solid, impartial, and ripe conclusions to be drawn. I have not attempted to draw them, because I prefer travelling to composing: an author is not independent, a traveller is. I therefore relate my impressions, and leave the reader to complete the book.

The above reflections on the Russian character have been suggested by several visits that I have made in Yaroslaf. I consider this central point as one of the most interesting in my journey.

I will relate to-morrow the result of my visit to the chief personage of the place, the governor, for I have just sent him my letter. I have been told, or rather given to infer, much to his disparagement in the various houses that I have visited this morning.

The primitive drowska is to be seen in this city. It consists of a little board on four wheels, entirely concealed under the occupant, and looks as though the horse were fastened to his person; two of the wheels are covered by his legs, and the other two are so low that they disappear under the rapid motion of the machine.

The female peasants generally go barefoot. The men most frequently wear a species of sandal made of rushes, rudely platted, which resembles those of antiquity. The leg is clothed in a wide pantaloon, the folds of which, drawn together at the ancle by a little fillet, are covered with the shoe. This attire is precisely similar to the Scythian statues of the Roman sculptors.

I am writing in a wretched inn; there are but two good ones in Russia, and they are kept by foreigners: the English boarding-house at Saint Petersburg, and

that of Madame Howard, at Moscow, are those to which I refer. In the houses even of independent private people, I cannot seat myself without trembling.

I have seen several public baths, both at Petersburg and Moscow. The people bathe in different ways: some enter chambers heated to a temperature that appears to me insupportable; the penetrating vapour of these stews is absolutely suffocating. In other chambers, naked men, standing upon heated floors, are soaped and washed by others also naked. The people of taste have their own baths, as in other places: but so many individuals resort to these public establishments; the warm humidity there is so favourable to insect life, the clothes laid down in them are nurseries of so many vermin, that the visitor rarely departs without carrying with him some irrefragable proof of the sordid negligence of the lower orders.

Before cleansing their own persons, those who make use of the public baths ought to insist on the cleansing out of these dens where the old Muscovites revel in their dirtiness, and hasten old age by the inordinate use of steam, and by the perspiration it provokes.

It is now ten o'clock in the evening. The governor has sent to inform me that his son and his carriage will presently attend me. I have answered, with many thanks, that having retired for the night, I cannot this evening avail myself of his kindness; but that I shall pass the whole of the morrow at Yaroslaf, and shall then make my acknowledgments in person. I am not sorry to have this opportunity of observing Russian hospitality in the provinces.

This morning, about eleven, the governor's son, who is a mere child, arrived in full uniform, to take me in a carriage-and-four, with coachman, and *faleiter* mounted on the off-side horse, an equipage precisely similar to that of the courtiers at Petersburg. This elegant apparition at the door of my inn disappointed me; I saw at once that it was not with old Muscovites, with true boyards, that I had to do. I felt that I should be again among European travellers, courtiers of the Emperor Alexander, and lordly cosmopolites.

"My father knows Paris," said the young man; "he will be delighted to see a Frenchman."

"At what period was he in France?"

The young Russian was silent; my question appeared to disconcert him, although I had thought it a very simple one: at first I was unable to account for his embarrassment; after discovering its cause, I gave him credit for an exquisite delicacy, — a rare sentiment in every country and at every age.

M. ——, governor of Yaroslaf, had visited France, in the suite of the Emperor Alexander, during the campaigns of 1813 and 1814, and this was a reminiscence of which his son was unwilling to remind me. His tact recalled to my memory a very different trait. One day, in a small town of Germany, I dined with the envoy of a petty German government, who, in presenting me to his wife, said that I was a Frenchman.

"He's an enemy, then," interrupted their son, a boy of apparently thirteen or fourteen years old.

That young gentleman had not been sent to school in Russia.

On entering the spacious and brilliant saloon, where the governor, his lady, and their numerous family awaited me, I could have imagined myself in London, or rather in Petersburg, for the lady of the house was ensconced, *à la russe*, in the little cabinet enclosed by gilded trellis, and raised a few steps, which occupied a corner of the saloon, and which is called the *altane*. The governor received me with politeness, and led me across the saloon, past several male and female relatives who had met there, into the verdant cabinet, where I found his wife.

Scarcely had she invited me to sit down in this sanctuary than she thus addressed me: "Monsieur de Custine, does Elzéar still write fables?"

My uncle, Count Elzéar de Sabran, had been from his boyhood celebrated in the society of Versailles for his poetical talent, and he would have been equally so in public society if his friends and relations could have persuaded him to publish his collections of fables — a species of poetical code, enlarged by time and experience; for every circumstance of his life, every public and private event, has inspired him with one of these apologues, always ingenious, and often profound, and to which an elegant and easy versification, an original and piquant turn of expression, impart a peculiar charm. The recollection of this was far from my thoughts when I entered the house of the governor of Yaroslaf, for my mind was occupied with the hope, too rarely satisfied, of finding real Russians in Russia.

I replied to the lady of the governor by a smile of astonishment, which silently said — explain to me this mystery. The explanation was soon given. "I was brought up," continued the lady, "by a

friend of your grandmother, Madame de Sabran; that friend often spoke to me of her natural grace and charming wit, as well as of the mind and talents of your uncle and your mother; she often even spoke to me of you, though she had left France before your birth. It is Madame —— to whom I allude; she accompanied into Russia the Polignac family when they became *émigrés*, and since the death of the Duchess de Polignac she has never left me."

In concluding these words Madame —— presented me to her governess, an elderly person, who spoke French better than I, and whose countenance expressed penetration and gentleness.

I saw that I must once again renounce my dream of the boyards, a dream which, notwithstanding its futility, did not leave me without awaking some regret; but I had wherewith to indemnify myself for my mistake. Madame ——, the wife of the governor, belongs to one of the great original families of Lithuania; she was born Princess ——. Over and above the politeness common to nearly all people of this rank, in every land, she has acquired the taste and the tone of French society, as it existed in its most flourishing epoch; and, although yet young, she reminds me, by the noble simplicity of her manners, of the elderly persons whom I knew in my childhood. Those manners are the traditions of the old court, respect for every kind of propriety, good taste in its highest perfection, for it includes even good and kindly dispositions, in short, every thing that was attractive in the higher circles of Paris at the time when our social superiority was denied by none; at the time when Madame de Marsan, limiting herself

to an humble pension, retired voluntarily to a small apartment in the Assomption, and for ten years devoted her immense income to paying the debts of her brother, the Prince de Guémenée, — by this noble sacrifice extenuating, as far as was in her power, the disgrace and scandal of a bankrupt nobleman.

All this will teach me nothing about the country I am inspecting, I thought to myself, nevertheless it will afford me a pleasure that I should be loath to deny myself, for it is one that has now become more rare perhaps, than is the satisfaction of the simple curiosity which brought me here.

I fancied myself in the chamber of my grandmother*, though, indeed, on a day when the Chevalier de Boufflers was not there, nor Madame de Coaslin, nor even the lady of the house: for those brilliant models of the character of intellect which formerly adorned French conversation have gone, never to return, even in Russia; but I found myself in the chosen circle of their friends and disciples, assembled, as it were, in their absence; and I felt as though we were waiting for them, and that they would soon reappear.

I was not in the least prepared for this species of emotion; of all the surprises of my journey it has been for me the most unexpected.

The lady of the house participated in my astonishment; for she told me of the exclamation she had made the previous evening, on perceiving my name at the bottom of the note I had sent to the governor.

* The Countess de Sabran, afterwards Marchioness de Boufflers, who died at Paris in 1827, aged 78 years.

The singularity of the rencontre, in a region where I supposed myself as little known as a Chinese, immediately gave a familiar and friendly tone to the conversation, which became general, without ceasing to be agreeable and easy. There was nothing concerted or affected in the pleasure they seemed to take in seeing me. The surprise had been reciprocal: no one had expected me at Yaroslaf; I had only decided to take that route the day before leaving Moscow.

The brother of the governor's wife, a Prince ——, writes our language perfectly well. He has published volumes of French verses, and was kind enough to present me with one of his collections. On opening the book, my eyes fell upon this line, full of sentiment; it occurs in a piece entitled *Consolations à une Mère:*

"Les pleurs sont la fontaine où notre âme s'épure." *

Assuredly, he is fortunate who expresses his idea so well in a foreign language.

All the members of the —— family vied with each other in doing me the honours of the house and of the city.

My books were loaded with indirect and ingenious praises, and were cited so as to recall to my mind a crowd of details that I had forgotten. The delicate and natural manner in which these quotations were introduced would have pleased me if they had less flattered me. The small number of books which the censorship allows to penetrate so far, remain popular a long time. I may say, not in my own personal praise,

* Tears are the fount that purifies the soul.

but in that of the times in which we live, that in travelling over Europe the only hospitality really worthy of gratitude that I have received has been that which I owe to my writings. They have created for me among strangers a small number of friends, whose kindness, ever new, has in no slight degree contributed to prolong my inborn taste for travelling and for poetry. If a position of so little importance as the one which I occupy in our literature has procured me such advantages, it is easy to conceive the influence which the talents that among us rule the thinking world, must exercise.

This apostleship of our authors constitutes the real power of France: but what responsibility does not such a vocation carry with it! It is, however, viewed as are other offices; the desire of obtaining it causes the danger of exercising it to be forgotten. As regards myself, if, during the course of my life, I have understood and felt one sentiment of ambition, it has been that of sharing, according to my powers, in this government of the human mind, as superior to political power as electricity is to gunpowder.

A great deal was said to me about Jean Sbogar; and when it was known that I had the happiness of being personally acquainted with the author, a thousand questions were asked me regarding him. Would that I had had, in order to answer, the talent for narration which he possesses in so high a degree!

One of the brothers-in-law of the governor has taken me to see the Convent of the Transfiguration, which serves as residence for the archbishop of Yaroslaf. This monastery, like all the Greek religious houses, is a kind of low citadel, enclosing several

churches, and numerous small edifices of every style except the good style.

The only thing that appeared to me novel and striking in the visit, was the devotion of my *guide*, Prince ——. He bent his forehead, and applied his lips, with a fervour that was surprising, to all the objects presented for the veneration of the faithful; and in this convent, which encloses several sanctuaries, he performed the same ceremonies in twenty different places. Meanwhile his drawing-room conversation announced nothing of this devotion of the cloister. He concluded by inviting me also to kiss the relics of a saint whose tomb a monk had opened for us. I saw him make at least fifty signs of the cross; he kissed twenty images and relics: in short, not any one of our nuns in the seclusion of her convent would repeat so many genufluxions, salutations, and inclinations of the head in passing and repassing the high altar of her church, as did this Russian prince, an old officer and aide-de-camp of the Emperor Alexander, in presence of a stranger, in the monastery of the Transfiguration.

The Greeks cover the walls of their churches with fresco paintings in the Byzantine style. A foreigner feels at first some respect for these representations, because he believes them ancient; but when he finds that the churches which appear the most ancient have been recoloured, and often rebuilt but yesterday, his veneration soon changes into profound ennui. The madonnas, even the ones most newly painted, resemble those that were brought into Italy towards the end of the middle ages, to revive there the taste for art. But since then, the Italians — their genius electrized by the con-

quering spirit of the Roman church — have perceived and pursued the grand and the beautiful, and have produced all that the world has seen of most sublime in every branch of art; during which time the Greeks of the Lower Empire, and the Russians after them, have continued faithfully to chalk their Virgins of the eighth century.

The Eastern Church has never been favourable to the arts. Since schism was declared, she has done nothing but benumb all minds with the subtleties of theology. In the present day, the true believers in Russia dispute seriously among themselves as to whether it is permitted to give the natural flesh-colour to the heads of the Virgin, or if it is necessary to continue to colour them, like the pretended madonnas of St. Luke, with that tint of bistre which is so unnatural. There is also much dispute among them as to the manner of representing the rest of the person: it is uncertain whether the body ought to be painted, or imitated in metal and enclosed in a kind of cuirass, which leaves the face alone visible, or sometimes the eyes only. The reader must explain to himself, as he best can, why a metallic body appears more decent in the eyes of the Greek priests than canvas painted as a woman's robe.

We are not yet at the end of the great points of dispute in the Greek church. Certain doctors, whose number is large enough to form a sect, have conscientiously separated themselves from the mother-church because she now shields within her bosom impious innovators, who permit the priests to give the sacerdotal benediction with three fingers of the hand, whereas the true tradition wills that the fore and

middle fingers only shall be charged with the task of dispensing blessings upon the faithful.

Such are the questions now agitated in the Greco-Russian church; and let it not be supposed that they are considered puerile: they inflame passions, provoke heresy, and decide the fate of men in this world and in the next. To return to my entertainers:

The great Russian nobles appear to me more amiable in the provinces than at court.

The wife of the governor of Yaroslaf has, at this moment, all her family united around her; several of her sisters, with their husbands and children, are lodged in her house: she admits also to her table the principal employés of her husband, who are inhabitants of the city; her son also is still attended by a tutor; so that at dinner there were twenty persons to sit down to table.

It is the custom of the north to precede the principal repast by a smaller refection, which is served in the saloon, a quarter of an hour before entering the dining-room. This preliminary, which is destined to sharpen the appetite, is called in Russian, if my ear has not deceived me, zacuska. The servants bring upon trays small plates filled with fresh caviare, such as is only eaten in this country, dried fish, cheese, salt meats, sea biscuits, and pastry; with these, bitter liqueurs, French brandy, London porter, Hungarian wine, &c., are also brought in; and these things are eaten and drunk standing. A stranger, ignorant of the usages of the country, or an appetite easily satisfied, might very soon here make a meal, and remain afterwards a spectator only of the real dinner. The Russians eat plentifully, and keep a liberal table;

but they are too fond of hashes, stuffing, little balls of mince-meat, and fish in pâtés.

One of the most delicate fishes in the world is caught in the Volga, where it abounds. It is called the sterled, and unites the flavour of the sea and fresh water fishes, without, however, resembling any that I have eaten elsewhere. This fish is large, its flesh light and fine; its head, pointed and full of cartilages, is considered delicate; the monster is seasoned very skilfully, but without many spices: the sauce that is served with it unites the flavour of wine, strong meat broth, and lemon-juice. I prefer this national dish to all the other ragouts of the land, and especially to the cold and sour soup, that species of fish-broth, iced, that forms the detestable treat of the Russians. They also make soups of sugared vinegar, of which I have tasted enough to prevent my ever asking for any more.

The governor's dinner was good and well served, without superfluity, and without useless *recherche*. The abundance and excellent quality of the water-melons astonishes me: it is said that they come from the environs of Moscow, but I should rather imagine they send to the Crimea for them. It is the custom in this country to place the dessert upon the table at the commencement of the dinner, and to serve it plate by plate. This method has its advantages and its inconveniences: it seems to me only perfectly proper at great dinners.

The Russian dinners are of a reasonable length; and nearly all the guests disperse upon rising from table. Some practise the Oriental habit of the siesta; others take a promenade or return to their business after

drinking coffee. Dinner is not here the repast which finishes the labours of the day; and when I took leave of the lady of the house, she had the kindness to engage me to return and pass the evening with her. I accepted the invitation, for I felt it would be impolite to refuse it: all that is offered to me here, is done with so much good taste, that neither my fatigue nor my wish to retire and write to my friends, are sufficient to preserve my liberty: such hospitality is a pleasant tyranny; it would be indelicate not to accept it; a carriage-and-four and a house are placed at my disposal, a whole family are troubling themselves to amuse me and to show me the country; and this is done without any affected compliments, superfluous protestations, or importunate *empressement:* I do not know how to resist so much rare simplicity, grace, and elegance; I should yield were it only from a patriotic instinct, for there is in these agreeable manners a souvenir of ancient France which affects and attracts me: it seems as though I had come to the frontiers of the civilised world to reap a part of the heritage of the French spirit of the eighteenth century, a spirit that has been long lost among ourselves. This inexpressible charm of good manners, and of simple language, reminds me of a paradox of one of the most intellectual men I have ever known: "There is not," he says, "a bad action nor a bad sentiment that has not its source in a fault of manners; consequently true politeness is virtue; it is all the virtues united." He went yet further; he pretended there was no other vice but that of coarseness.

At nine o'clock this evening I returned to the

house of the governor. We had first music, and afterwards a lottery.

One of the brothers of the lady of the house plays the violoncello in a charming manner; he was accompanied on the piano by his wife, a very agreeable woman. This duo, as well as many national airs, sung with taste, made the evening pass rapidly.

The conversation of Madame de ——, the old friend of my grandmother and of Madame de Polignac, contributed in no slight degree to shorten it. This lady has lived in Russia for forty-seven years; she has viewed and judged the country with discernment and justice, and she states the truth without hostility, and yet without oratorical precautions: this is new to me; her frankness strangely contrasts with the universal dissimulation practised by the Russians. An intelligent French woman, who has passed her life among them, ought, I think, to know them better than they know themselves; for they blind themselves in order the better to impose falsehood upon others. Madame de —— said and repeated to me, that in this country the sentiment of honour is without power except in the heart of the women: they have made it a matter of religion to be faithful to their word, to despise falsehood, to observe delicacy in money affairs, and independence in politics; in short, according to Madame de ——, the greater number of them possess what is wanted in the great majority of the men — probity in all the circumstances of life, whether of greater or less importance. In general, the Russian women think more than the men, because they act less. Leisure, that advantage inherent in a woman's mode of life, is as advantageous

to their character as to their understanding; they are better informed, less servile, and possess more energy of sentiment than the other sex. Heroism itself often appears to them natural, and becomes easy. The Princess Troubetzkoï is not the only woman who has followed her husband to Siberia; many exiled men have received from their wives this sublime proof of devotion, which loses none of its value for being less rare than I imagined it: unfortunately I do not know their names. Where will they find a historian and a poet? Were it only on account of unknown virtues, it would be necessary to believe in a last judgment. The glory of the good is a part which would be wanting to the justice of God: we can imagine the pardon of the Omnipotent; we cannot imagine his indifference. Virtue is only so called, because it cannot be recompensed by men. It would lose its perfection and become a matter of mercenary calculation if it were sure of always being appreciated and remunerated upon earth: virtue which did not reach to the supernatural and the sublime would be incomplete. If evil did not exist, where would there be saints? The combat is necessary to the victory, and the victory may even ask from God the crown of conqueror. This beautiful spectacle justifies Providence, which, in order to present it to the attentive Heaven, tolerates the errors of the world.

Towards the close of the evening, before permitting me to leave, my entertainers, with the view of paying me a compliment, expedited, by several days, a ceremony which has been looked forward to for six months in the family: it was the drawing of a lottery, the ob-

ject of which was charity. All the prizes, consisting of articles made by the lady of the house, her friends and relatives, were tastefully spread upon the tables: the one which fell to me, I cannot say by chance, for my tickets had been carefully selected, was a pretty note-book with a varnished cover. I wrote in it the date, and added a few words by way of remembrance. In the times of our fathers, an impromptu in verse would have been suggested; but, in these days, when public impromptus abound *ad nauseam*, those of the *salon* are out of date. Ephemeral literature, politics, and philosophy have dethroned the quatrain and the sonnet. I had not the ready wit to write a single couplet; but I should, in justice, add, that neither did I feel the ambition.

After bidding farewell to my amiable entertainers, whom I am to meet again at the fair of Nijni, I returned to my inn, very well satisfied with the day. The house of the peasant in which I lodged the day before yesterday, and the saloon of to-day, in other words, Kamtschatka and Versailles within a distance traversed in a few hours, present a contrast which describes Russia.

I sacrifice my nights to relate to my friends the objects that strike me during the day. My chapter is not finished, and dawn already appears.

The contrasts in this empire are abrupt;-so much so that the peasant and the lord do not seem to belong to the same land: the grandees are as cultivated as if they lived in another country; the serfs are as ignorant and savage as though they served under lords like themselves.

It is much less with the abuses of aristocracy that

I reproach the Russian government, than with the absence of an authorised aristocratic power, whose attributes are clearly and constitutionally defined. Recognised political aristocracies have always struck me as being beneficent in their influence; whilst the aristocracies that have no other foundation than the chimeras, or the injustices of privileges, are pernicious because their attributes remain undefined and ill regulated. It is true the Russian lords are masters, and too absolute masters, in their territories; whence arise those excesses that fear and hypocrisy conceal by humane phrases, softly pronounced, which deceive travellers, and too often the government also. But these men, though monarchs in their far distant domains, have no power in the state; they do what they please on their own estates, defying the power of the emperor, by corrupting or intimidating his secondary agents; but the country is not governed by them; they enjoy no consideration in the general direction of affairs. It is only by becoming courtiers, by labouring for promotion in the tchinn, that they can obtain any public credit or standing. This life of the courtier excludes all elevation of sentiment, independence of spirit, and humane, patriotic views, which are essential elements of aristocratic bodies legally constituted, in states organised to extend their power and to flourish long.

The government, on the other hand, equally excludes the just pride of the man who has made his fortune by his labour. It unites all the disadvantages of democracy with those of despotism, and rejects every thing that is good in both systems.

Russia is governed by a class of subaltern employés,

transferred direct from the public schools to the public administration. These individuals, who are very frequently the sons of men born in foreign lands, are noble so soon as they wear a cross at their button-hole; and it is only the Emperor who gives this decoration. Invested with the magical sign, they become proprietors of lands and of men; and thus obtaining power without obtaining also that heritage of magnanimity natural in a chieftain born and habituated to command, the new lords use their authority like upstarts as they are, and render odious to the nation, and the world, the system of servitude established in Russia, at the period when ancient Europe began to destroy her feudal institutions. By virtue of their offices, these despots oppress the country with impunity, and incommode even the Emperor; who perceives, with astonishment, that he is not so powerful as he imagined, though he dares not complain or even confess it to himself. This is the bureaucracy, a power terrible every where, because its abuses are always made in the name of order, but more terrible in Russia than any where else. When we see administrative tyranny substituted for Imperial despotism, we may tremble for a land where is established, without counterbalance, the system of government propagated in Europe under the French Empire.

The emperors of Russia, equally mistaken in their confidence and their suspicion, viewed the nobles as rivals, and sought only to find slaves in the men they needed for ministers. Hence has sprung up the swarms of obscure agents who labour to govern the land in obedience to ideas not their own; from which it

follows that they can never satisfy real wants. This class of employés, hostile in their hearts to the order of things which they direct, are recruited in a great measure from among the sons of the popes* — a body of vulgar aspirants, of upstarts without talent, for they need no merit to oblige the state to disembarrass itself of the burden which they are upon it; people who approach to all the ranks without possessing any; minds which participate alike in the popular prejudices and the aristocratic pretensions, without having the energy of the one or the wisdom of the other: to include all in one clause, the sons of the priests are revolutionists charged with maintaining the established order.

Half enlightened, liberal as the ambitious, as fond of oppressing as the slave, imbued with crude philosophical notions utterly inapplicable to the country which they call their own, though all their sentiments and semi-enlightened ideas come from abroad, these men are urging the nation towards a goal of which they are perhaps ignorant themselves, which the Emperor has never imagined, and which is not one that true Russians or true friends of humanity will desire.

This permanent conspiracy dates as far back as the time of Napoleon. The political Italian had foreseen the danger of the Russian power; and wishing to weaken the enemy of revolutionised Europe, he had recourse in the first place to the influence of ideas. He profited by his friendly relations with the Empero Alexander, and by the innate tendency of that prince towards liberal institutions, to send to Petersburg,

* Greek priests.

under pretext of aiding in the accomplishment of the Emperor's designs, a great number of political workmen,—a kind of masked army, charged with secretly preparing the way for our soldiers. These skilful intriguers were instructed to mix themselves up with the government, and especially with the system of public education, and to instil into the minds of the rising generation doctrines opposed to the political religion of the land. Thus did the great warrior—heir to the French revolution and foe to the liberties of the world—throw from afar the seeds of trouble and of discord, because the unity of despotism appeared to him a dangerous weapon in the military government which constitutes the immense power of Russia.

That empire is now reaping the fruit of the slow and profound policy of the adversary it flattered itself that it had conquered, — an adversary whose posthumous machiavelism survives reverses unheard of in the history of human wars. To the secretly-working influence of these pioneers of our armies, and to that of their children and their disciples, I attribute in a great measure the revolutionary ideas which have taken root in many families, and even in the army; and the explosion of which has produced the conspiracies that we have seen hitherto breaking themselves against the strength of the established government. Perhaps I deceive myself, but I feel persuaded that the present Emperor will triumph over these ideas, by crushing, even to the last man, those who defend them.

I was far from expecting to find in Russia such vestiges of our policy, and to hear from the mouths of Russians reproaches similar to those that the Spa-

niards have addressed to us for thirty-five years past. If the mischievous intentions which the Russians attribute to Napoleon were real, no interest, no patriotism could justify them. We cannot save one part of the world by deceiving the other. Our religious propagandism appears to me sublime, because the Catholic church accords with every form of government and every degree of civilisation, over which it reigns with all the superiority of mind over body: but political proselytism, that is to say, the narrow spirit of conquest, or to speak yet more justly, the spirit of rapine justified by that skilful sophistry called glory, is odious; for, far from drawing together the human race, this contracted ambition divides them: unity can only give birth to elevated and extended ideas; but the politics of national interference are always little; its liberality is hypocritical or tyrannical; its benefits are ever deceptive: every nation should derive from within itself the means for the improvements it requires.

To resume: the problem proposed, not by men, but by events, by the concatenation of circumstances, to an emperor of Russia, is to favour among the nation the progress of knowledge in order to hasten the emancipation of the serfs; and further to aim at this object by the improving of manners, by the encouraging of humanity and of legal liberty; in short, by ameliorating hearts with the view of alleviating destinies. Such is the condition imperative upon any man who would now reign, even at Moscow: but the peculiarity of the Emperor's position is, that he has to shape his course towards this object, keeping clear on the one side of the mute though well-organised

tyranny of a revolutionary administration, and on the other of the arrogance and the conspiracies of an aristocracy so much the more unquiet and formidable as its power is vague and undefined.

It must be owned that no sovereign has yet acquitted himself in this terrible task with so much firmness, talent, and good fortune as have been displayed by the Emperor Nicholas. He is the first of the modern Russian princes who has perceived the necessity of being a Russian in order to confer good upon the Russians. Undoubtedly history will say: This man was a great sovereign.

I have no time left for sleeping: the horses are already in my carriage, and I shall soon be on the road to Nijni.

CHAP. XXXII.*

THE BANKS OF THE VOLGA. — RUSSIAN COACHMEN IN MOUNTAIN ROADS. — KOSTROMA. — FERRY ON THE VOLGA. — ACCIDENT IN A FOREST. — BEAUTY OF THE WOMEN. — CIVILISATION INJURIOUS. — ROUSSEAU JUSTIFIED. — ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD SARMATIAN. — ELEGANCE, INDUSTRY, AND HUMILITY OF THE PEASANTS. — THEIR MUSIC. — NATIONAL MUSIC DANGEROUS TO DESPOTISM. — THE ROAD TO SIBERIA. — A PICTURE OF RUSSIA. — EXILES ON THE ROAD.

Our road follows the course of the Volga. Yesterday I crossed that river at Yaroslaf, and I have re-crossed it to-day at Kunitcha. In many places its two banks differ in physical aspect. On one side stretches an immense plain level with the water, on the other, the bank forms an almost perpendicular wall, sometimes a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet high. This rampart or natural embankment, which extends a considerable way backwards from the river before it again loses itself in gradual slopes upon the plain, is clothed with osiers and birch, and is broken from distance to distance by the river's tributaries. These water-courses form deep furrows in the bank, which they have to pierce in order to reach the mighty stream. The bank is quite a mountain chain, and the furrows are real valleys, across which the road parallel to the Volga is carried.

* Written at Yourewetch Powolskoi, a small town between Yaroslaf and Nijni Novgorod.

The Russian coachmen, although so skilful on level ground, are, on mountainous roads, the most dangerous drivers in the world. That on which we are now travelling puts their prudence and my sang-froid to the full proof. The continual ascending and descending would, if the declivities were longer, be, under their mode of driving, extremely perilous. The coachman commences the descent at a foot's pace; when about a third of it is got over, which generally brings you to the steepest part, man and horses begin mutually to weary of their unaccustomed prudence; the latter get into a gallop, the carriage rolls after with constantly increasing velocity until it reaches the middle of a bridge of planks, frail, disjointed, uneven, and movable; for they are placed, but not fixed, upon the beams which support them, and under the poles which serve as rails to the trembling structure. A bridge of this kind is found at the bottom of each ravine. If the horses, in their wild gallop, do not bring the carriage straight on the planks, it will be overturned. The life of the traveller depends entirely upon the address of the driver, and upon the legs of four spirited, but weak and tired animals. If a horse stumbles, or a leather breaks, all is lost.

At the third repetition of this hazardous game I desired that the wheel should be locked, but there was no drag on my Moscow carriage: I had been told that it was never necessary to lock the wheel in Russia. To supply the want, it was necessary to detach one of the horses, and to use its traces. I have ordered the same operation to be repeated, to the great astonishment of the drivers, each time that the length and steepness of the declivity has seemed

to threaten the safety of the carriage, the frailness of which I have already only too often experienced. The coachmen, astonished as they appear, do not make the least objection to my strange fancies, nor in any way oppose the orders that I give them through the feldjäger; but I can read their thoughts in their faces. The presence of a government-servant procures me every where marks of deference: such a proof of favour on the part of the authorities renders me an object of respect among the people. I would not advise any stranger, so little experienced as I am, to risk himself without such a guide on Russian roads, especially those of the interior.

When the traveller has been so fortunate as to cross safely the bottom of the ravine, the next difficulty is to climb the opposite bank. The Russian horses know no other pace but the gallop: if the road is not heavy, the hill short, and the carriage light, they bring you to the summit in a moment; but if the ascent is long, or the road, as is frequently the case, sandy, they soon come to a stop; panting and exhausted, in the middle of their task, they turn stupid under the application of the whip, kick, and run back, to the imminent danger of throwing the carriage into the ditches; while at each dilemma of the kind I say to myself, in derision of the pretensions of the Russians, there are no distances in Russia!

The coachmen, however adroit they may be, want experience when they leave their native plains; they do not understand the proper manner of getting horses over mountains. At the first signs of hesitation every body alights; the servants push at the wheels; at every few steps the horses stop to breathe,

when the men rub their nostrils with vinegar, and encourage them with voice and hand. In this manner, aided by strokes of the whip, generally applied with admirable judgment, we gain the summit of these formidable ridges, which in other countries would be climbed without difficulty. The road from Yaroslaf to Nijni is one of the most hilly in the interior of Russia; and yet I do not believe that this natural rampart or quay that crowns the banks of the Volga exceeds the height of a house of five or six stories in Paris.

There is one danger when journeying in Russia which could hardly be foreseen — the danger the traveller runs of breaking his head against the cover of his calèche. He who intends visiting the country need not smile, for the peril is actual and imminent. The logs of which the bridges and often the roads themselves are made, render the carriages liable to shocks so violent, that the traveller when not warned would be thrown out if his equipage were open, and would break his neck if the head were up. It is therefore advisable, in Russia, to procure a carriage the top of which is as lofty as possible. A bottle of Seltzer-water, substantial as those bottles are, has, although well packed in hay, been broken under my seat, by the violence of the jolts.

Yesterday I slept in a post-house, where there was a want of every common convenience. My carriage is so uncomfortable, and the roads are so rough, that I cannot journey more than twenty-four hours together without suffering from violent headache, and, therefore, as I prefer a bad lodging to brain-fever, I stop wherever we may happen to be. The greatest rarity in these out-of-the-way lodgings, and indeed

in all Russia, is clean linen. I carry my bed with me, but I cannot burden myself with much store of bed-clothes; and the table-cloths which they give me at the post-houses have always been in use. Yesterday, at eleven o'clock in the evening, the master of the post-house sent to a village more than a league distant to search for clean sheets on my account. I should have protested against this excess of zeal in my feldjäger, but I did not know of it until the next morning. From the window of my kennel, by the obscured light that is called night in Russia, I could admire at leisure the eternal Roman peristyle, which, with its wooden, whitewashed pediment and its plaster pillars, adorns, on the stable side, the Russian post-houses. This clumsy architecture creates a nightmare that follows me from one end of the empire to the other. The classic column has become the sign of a public building in Russia: false magnificence here displays itself by the side of the most complete penury; but "comfort," and elegance well understood and every where the same, is not to be seen, either in the palaces of the wealthy, where the saloons are superb, but where the bed-chamber is only a screen, or yet in the huts of the peasants. There may, perhaps, be two or three exceptions to this rule in the whole empire. Even Spain appears to me less in want than Russia of objects of convenience and necessity.

Another precaution indispensable to a traveller in this country is a Russian lock. All the Slavonian peasants are thieves, in the houses if not on the high-way. When, therefore, you have got your luggage into the room of an inn, full of different classes of

people, it is necesssary, before going out to walk, either to make your servants mount guard at the door, or to lock it. One of your people will be already engaged in keeping watch over the carriage; and there are no keys, nor even locks, to the doors of apartments in Russian inns. The only expedient, therefore, is to be provided with staples, rings, and padlock. With these you may speedily place your property in safety. The country swarms with the most adroit and audacious of robbers. Their depredations are so frequent, that justice does not dare to be rigorous. Every thing is here done by fits and starts, or with exceptions,—a capricious system, which too well accords with the ill-regulated minds of the people, who are as indifferent to equity in action as to truth in speech.

I yesterday visited the convent of Kostroma, and saw the apartments of Alexis Romanow and his mother, a retreat which Alexis left to ascend the throne, and to found the actual reigning dynasty. The convent was like all the others. A young monk, who was not fasting, and who smelt of wine at a considerable distance, showed me the house. I prefer old monks with white beards, and popes with bald heads, to these young, well-fed recluses. The Treasury, also, resembled those I had seen elsewhere. Would the reader know in a few words, what is Russia? Russia is a country where the same persons and the same things are every where to be seen. This is so true, that on arriving at any place, we think always that we recognise persons whom we had left elsewhere.

At Kunitcha, the ferry-boat in which we re-crossed the Volga had sides so low, that the smallest thing

would have caused it to upset. Nothing has ever appeared to me more dull and gloomy than this little town, which I visited during a cold rain, accompanied with wind, that kept the inhabitants prisoners in their houses. Had the wind increased, we should have run much risk of being drowned in the river. I recollected that at Petersburg no one stirs a step to save those that fall into the Neva; and I thought, that should the same fate happen to me here, not an attempt would be made to save me by any one on these banks—populous though they appear a desert, so gloomy and silent are the soil, the heavens, and the inhabitants. The life of man has little importance in the eyes of the Russians; and, judging by their melancholy air, I should say they are indifferent to their own lives as well as to those of others.

Existence is so fettered and restrained, that every one seems to me secretly to cherish the desire of changing his abode, without possessing the power. The great have no passports, the poor no money, and all remain as they are, patient through despair, that is, as indifferent about death as about life. Resignation, which is every where else a virtue, is in Russia a vice, because it perpetuates the compulsory immobility of things.

The question here, is not one of political liberty, but of personal independence, of freedom of movement, and even of the expression of natural sentiment. The slaves dare only quarrel in a low voice; anger is one of the privileges of power. The greater the appearance of calm under this system, the more do I pity the people: tranquillity or the knout!—this is for them the condition of existence. The knout of

the great is Siberia; and Siberia itself is only an exaggeration of Russia.

I am writing in the middle of a forest, many leagues from any habitation. We are stopped in a deep bed of sand by an accident that has happened to my carriage; and while my valet is, with the aid of a peasant whom Heaven has sent us, repairing the damage, I, who am humbled by the want of resources which I find within myself for such an occurrence, and who feel that I should only be in the way of the workmen if I attempted to assist them, take up my pen to prove the inutility of mental culture, when man, deprived of all the accessories of civilisation, is obliged to struggle, without any other resource but his own strength, against a wild nature, still armed with all the primitive power that it received from God.

As I have before said, handsome female peasants are scarce in Russia; but, when they are handsome, their beauty is perfect. The oval shape of their eyes imparts a peculiar expression; the eye-lid is finely and delicately chiselled, but the blue of the pupil is often clouded, which reminds one of the ancient Sarmatians, as described by Tacitus: this hue gives to their veiled glances a gentleness and an innocence, the charm of which is irresistible. They possess all the vague and shadowy delicacy of the women of the north, united with all the voluptuousness of the Oriental females. The expression of kindness in these ravishing creatures inspires a singular feeling — a mixture of respect and confidence. He must visit the interior of Russia who would know the real gifts of the primitive man, and all that the refine-

ments of society have lost for him. In this patriarchal land it is civilisation which spoils the inhabitants. The Slavonian was naturally ingenious, musical, and almost tender-hearted; the drilled Russian is false, tyrannical, imitative, and foolishly vain. It would take more than a century to establish an accord between the national manners and the new European ideas; supposing that, all the while, Russia were governed by enlightened princes,—friends of progress, as the expression now is. At present, the complete separation of classes makes social life a violent, immoral thing. It might be supposed that it was from this country Rousseau took the first idea of his system; for it is not even necessary to possess the resources of his magic eloquence to prove that arts and sciences have done more evil than good to the Slavonians. The future will show the world whether military and political glory can compensate the Russian nation for the happiness of which their social organisation deprives them.

Elegance is inborn among the men of pure Slavonian blood. Their characters unite a mixture of simplicity, gentleness, and sensibility, which seduce all hearts: they are often combined with a good deal of irony and some little deceitfulness; but, when the heart is naturally amiable, these faults are transformed into a kind of grace. The people further possess the advantage of a countenance, the delicacy in the expression of which is inimitable; it influences, by an unknown charm, by a tender melancholy, a suffering gentleness, which almost always springs from a secret sense of evil, hid by the sufferer from himself, in order the better to disguise it from others.

The Russians are, in short, a resigned nation, — this simple description explains every thing. The man who is deprived of liberty — and here the definition of that word extends to natural rights and real wants, — though he may have all other advantages, is like a plant excluded from the air: in vain do you water its roots, the languishing stem produces a few leaves, but will never send forth flowers.

The true Russians have something peculiar to themselves, both in their character, their countenance, and their whole bearing. Their carriage is light, and all their movements denote a natural superiority. Their eyes are large, of a long oval shape, and the eyelid is but little raised. Their glance combines an expression of sentiment and of mischievousness that is very taking. The Greeks, in their creative language, called the inhabitants of these regions Sauromedes, a word which signifies lizard-eyed; the Latin word Sarmatian is derived from it. This expression of the eye then has struck all attentive observers. The forehead of the Russians is neither very lofty nor very broad; but its form is classic and graceful. In the character of the people, both distrust and credulity, roguishness and tenderness, are united, — and these contrasts have a charm. The Slavonians are neither coarse nor apathetic, like most other northern races. Poetical as nature, their imagination mixes with all their affections; with them, love partakes of the nature of superstition; their attachments have more delicacy than vivacity: always refined, even when impassioned, it may be said that their intellect pervades their sentiment. All these fugitive shades of character are expressed in

their glance, — that glance which was so well characterised by the Greeks.

The ancient Greeks were endowed with an exquisite talent for appreciating men and things, and for describing them by names; a faculty which renders their language rich among all the European languages, and their poetry divine among all poetic schools.

The passionate fondness of the Russian peasants for tea proves to me the elegance of their nature, and well accords with the description I have given of them. Tea is a refined beverage: it has become in Russia an absolute necessary. When the common people ask for drink-money, they say, for tea, *na tchiai.*

This instinct of good taste has no connection with mental culture; it does not even exclude barbarism and cruelty, but it excludes vulgarity.

The spectacle now before my eyes proves to me the truth of what I have always heard respecting the Russians' singular dexterity and industry.

A Muscovite peasant makes it a principle to recognise no obstacles, — I do not mean to his own desires, unhappy creature! but to the orders he receives. Aided by his inseparable hatchet, he becomes a kind of magician, who creates in a moment all that is wanted in the desert. He repairs your carriage, or, if it is beyond repair, he makes another, a kind of telega, skilfully availing himself of the remains of the old one in the construction of the new. I was advised in Moscow to travel in a tarandasse, and I should have done well to have followed that advice; for, with such an equipage, there is never danger of stopping on the road. It can be repaired, and even re-constructed, by every Russian peasant.

If you wish to encamp, this universal genius will build you a dwelling for the night, and one that will be preferable to the taverns in the towns. After having established you as comfortably as you can expect to be, he wraps himself in his sheep-skin and sleeps at the door of your new house, of which he defends the entrance with the fidelity of a dog; or else he will seat himself at the foot of a tree before the abode that he has erected for you, and, while continuing to gaze at the sky, he will relieve the solitude of your lodging by national songs, the melancholy of which awakes a respond in the gentlest instincts of your heart; for an innate gift of music is still one of the prerogatives of this privileged race. The idea that it would be only just that he should share with you the cabin built by his hands will never enter his head.

Will these *élites* of their race remain much longer concealed in the deserts where Providence, with some design of its own, keeps them in reserve? Providence can only answer! The question as to when the hour of deliverance, and, yet more, of triumph, shall strike for them, is a secret with God.

I am struck with the simplicity of the ideas and sentiments of these men. God, the King of heaven; the Czar, the king of earth—this is all their theory: the orders, and even the caprices, of the master sanctioned by the obedience of the slave; this suffices for their practice. The Russian peasant believes that he owes both body and soul to his lord.

Conforming to this social devotion, he lives without joy, but not without pride; for pride is the moral element essential to the life of the intelligent being.

It takes every kind of form, even the form of humility, — that religious modesty discovered by Christians.

A Russian does not know what it is to say *no* to this lord, who represents to him his two other greater masters, God and the Emperor; and he places all his talent, all his glory, in conquering those little difficulties of existence that are magnified, and even valued, by the lower orders of other lands, as auxiliaries in their revenge against the rich, whom they consider as enemies, because they are esteemed the happy of the earth.

The Russians are too completely stripped of all the blessings of life to be envious: the men who are most to be pitied are those who no longer complain. The envious among us are those whose ambitious aims have failed: France, that land of easy living and rapid fortune-making, is a nursery of envious people. I cannot feel sympathy with the regrets, full of malice, that prey on these men, whose souls are enervated by the luxuries of life; but the patience of the peasants here, inspires me with a compassion — I had almost said, with an esteem that is profound. The political self-denial of the Russians is abject and revolting; their domestic resignation is noble and touching. The vice of the nation becomes the virtue of the individual.

The plaintive sadness of the Russian songs strikes every foreigner; but this music is not only melancholy, it is also scientific and complicated: it is composed of inspired melodies; and, at the same time, of harmonious combinations exceedingly abstruse, and that are not elsewhere attained except by study and calculation. Often, in travelling through villages, I

stop to listen to pieces executed by several voices with a precision, and a musical instinct, that I am never tired of admiring. The performers, in these rustic quintetti, guess, by intuition, the laws of counterpoint, the rules of composition, the principles of harmony, the effects of the different kinds of voice, and they disdain singing in unison. They execute series of concords, elaborate, unexpected, and interspersed with shakes, and delicate ornaments, which, if not always perfectly correct, are very superior to the national melodies heard in other lands.

The song of the Russian peasants is a nasal lamentation, not very agreeable when executed by one voice; but when sung in chorus, these complaints assume a grave, religious character, and produce effects of harmony that are surprising. I had supposed the Russian music to have been brought from Byzantium, but I am assured that it is indigenous: this will explain the profound melancholy of the airs, especially of those which affect gaiety by their vivacity of movement. If the Russians do not know how to revolt against oppression, they know how to sigh and groan under it.

Were I in the place of the emperor, I should not be content with forbidding my subjects to complain; I should also forbid them to sing, which is a disguised mode of complaining. These accents of lament are avowals, and may become accusations: so true it is that the arts themselves, under despotism, are not innocent; they are indirect protestations.

Hence, no doubt, the taste of the government and the courtiers for the works, literary or artistical, of foreigners: borrowed poetry has no roots. Among

a people of slaves, when patriotic sentiments produce profound emotions, they are dreaded: everything that is national, including even music, becomes a means of opposition.

It is so in Russia, where, from the corners of the farthest deserts, the voice of man lifts to heaven vengeful complaints; demanding from God the portion of happiness that is refused him upon earth. Nothing more strikingly reveals the habitual sufferings of the people than the mournfulness of their pleasures. The Russians have consolations, but no enjoyments. I am surprised that no one before me should have warned the government of its imprudence in allowing the people an amusement which betrays their misery and their resignation. He who is powerful enough to oppress men should, for consistency's sake, forbid them to sing.

I am now at the last stage on the road to Nijni. We have arrived on three wheels, and dragging a prop of wood in the place of the fourth.

A great part of the road from Yaroslaf to Nijni is a long garden avenue, traced almost always in a straight line, broader than the great avenue in our Champs-Élysées at Paris, and flanked on either side by two smaller alleys, carpeted with turf and shaded by birch-trees. The road is easy, for they drive nearly always upon the grass, except when crossing marshes by means of elastic bridges, a kind of floating floors, more curious than safe either for the carriages or the horses. A road on which grows so much grass can be little frequented, and is therefore the more easily kept

in repair. Yesterday, before we broke down, I was praising this road, which we were travelling at full gallop, to my feldjäger. "No doubt it is beautiful," replied the individual addressed, whose figure resembles that of a wasp, whose features are sharp and dry, and whose manners are at once timid and threatening, like hatred suppressed by fear: "no doubt it is beautiful — it is the great road to Siberia."

These words chilled me through. It is for my pleasure, I said to myself, that I travel this road: but what have been the thoughts and feelings of the many unfortunate beings who have travelled it before me? These thoughts and feelings, evoked by the imagination, took possession of my mind. Siberia! — that Russian hell, is, with all its phantoms, incessantly before me. It has upon me the effect that the eye of the basilisk has upon the fascinated bird.

What a country is this! a plain without limit and without colour; with only here and there some few inequalities in the surface, a few fields of oats and rye, a few scattered birch and pine woods in the distance, villages built of gray boards along the lines of road, on rather more elevated sites, at every twenty, thirty, or fifty leagues, towns the vast size of which swallows up the inhabitants, and immense, colourless rivers, dull as the heavens they reflect! Winter and death are felt to be hovering over these scenes, giving to every object a funereal hue: the terrified traveller, at the end of a few weeks, feels himself buried alive, and, stifling, struggles to burst his coffin-lid, that leaden veil that separates him from the living.

Do not go to the north to amuse yourselves, unless

at least you seek your amusement in study; for there is much here to study.

I was, then, travelling upon the great road to Siberia, when I saw in the distance a group of armed men, who had stopped under one of the side alleys of the road.

"What are those soldiers doing there?" I asked my courier.

"They are cossacks," he replied, "conducting exiles to Siberia!" ——

It is not, then, a dream, it is not the mythology of the gazettes; I see there the real, unhappy beings, the actual exiles, proceeding wearily on foot to seek the land where they must die forgotten by the world, far from all that is dear to them, alone with the God who never created them for such a fate. Perhaps I have met, or shall meet, their wives or mothers: for they are not criminals; on the contrary, they are Poles—the heroes of misfortune and devotion. Tears came into my eyes as I approached these unhappy men, near to whom I dared not even stop lest I should be suspected by my Argus. Alas! before such sufferings the sentiment of my impotent compassion humiliates me, and anger rises above commiseration in my heart. I could wish to be far away from a country where the miserable creature who acts as my courier can become formidable enough to compel me, in his presence, to dissimulate the most natural feelings of my heart. In vain do I repeat to myself that, perhaps, our convicts are still worse off than the colonists of Siberia: there is, in that distant exile, a vague poetry, which adds to the severity of the sentence all the influence of the imagination; and this

inhuman alliance produces a frightful result. Besides, our convicts are solemnly convicted; but a few months' abode in Russia suffices to convince us that there are no laws there.

There were three exiles, and they were all innocent in my eyes; for, under a despotism, the only criminal is the man who goes unpunished. These three convicts were escorted by six cossacks on horseback. The head of my carriage was closed, and the nearer we approached the group, the more narrowly did the courier strive to observe the expression of my countenance. I was greatly struck with the efforts he made to persuade me that they were only simple malefactors, and that there was no political convict among them. I preserved a gloomy silence: the pains that he took to reply to my thoughts appeared to me very significative.

Frightful sagacity of the subjects of despotism! all are spies, even as amateurs, and without compensation.

The last stages of the road to Nijni are long and difficult, owing to the sand-beds, which get deeper and deeper*, until the carriages become almost buried in them. They conceal immense, movable blocks of wood and stone, very dangerous to the carriages and horses. This part of the road is bordered by forests, in which, at every half league, are encampments of cossacks, destined to protect the journeying of the merchants who resort to the fair. Such a precaution reminds me of the middle ages.

My wheel is repaired, so that I hope to reach Nijni before evening.

* A chaussée is being made from Moscow to Nijni, which will be soon completed.

CHAP. XXXIII.

SITE OF NIJNI-NOVGOROD. — PREDILECTION OF THE EMPEROR FOR THAT CITY.—THE KREMLIN OF NIJNI. – CONCOURSE AT THE FAIR. — THE GOVERNOR. — BRIDGE OF THE OKA. — DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING A LODGING. — THE PLAGUE OF PERSICAS. — PRIDE OF THE FELDJÄGER. — THE FAIR-GROUND. — SUBTERRANEAN CITY. — SINGULAR APPEARANCE OF THE RIVER. — THE CITY OF TEA. — OF RAGS. — OF WHEELWRIGHTS' WORK. — OF IRON. — ORIGIN OF THE FAIR. — PERSIAN VILLAGE. — SALT FISH FROM THE CASPIAN. — LEATHER. — FURS. — LAZZARONIS OF THE NORTH. — BADLY CHOSEN SITE. — COMMERCIAL CREDIT OF THE SERFS. — THEIR MODE OF CALCULATING. — BAD FAITH OF THE NOBLES. — PRICES OF MERCHANDISE. — TURQUOISES OF THE BUCHARIANS. — KIRGUIS HORSES. — THE FAIR AFTER SUNSET. — THE EFFECT OF MUSIC IN RUSSIA.

THE situation of Nijni is the most beautiful that I have beheld in Russia. I see no longer a little ridge of low banks falling upon a large river, but a real mountain, which looks down on the confluence of the Volga and the Oka, two equally noble rivers; for the Oka, at its mouth, appears as large as the more celebrated stream. The lofty town of Nijni, built on this mountain, commands a plain, vast as the sea. A land without bounds spreads before it, and at its foot is held the largest fair in the world. During six weeks of the year the commerce of the two richest quarters of the globe meet at the confluence of the Oka and the Volga. It is a spot worthy of being painted. Hitherto, the only truly picturesque scenes that I had

admired in Russia were the streets of Moscow and the quays of Petersburg. But those scenes were the creations of man: here, the country is naturally beautiful. The ancient city of Nijni, instead, however, of seeking the rivers, and profiting by the riches they offer, hides itself behind the mountain; and there, lost in the country, seems to shrink from its glory and prosperity. This ill-advised situation has struck the Emperor Nicholas, who exclaimed the first time he saw the place — "*At* Nijni nature has done every thing, but man has spoilt all." To remedy the errors of the founders of Nijni-Novgorod, a suburb, in the form of a quay, has been built under the hill, on that one of the two points of land separating the rivers, which forms the right bank of the Oka. This new town increases every year; it is becoming more populous and important than the ancient city, from which it is separated by the old Kremlin of Nijni; for every Russian city has its Kremlin.

The fair is held on the other side of the Oka, upon a low tract, which forms a triangle between it and the Volga. The Oka is crossed by a bridge of boats, which serves as the road from the city to the fair, and which appears as long as that of the Rhine at Mayence. The two banks of the river thus connected, are very different in character: the one which is the promontory of Nijni, rises majestically in the midst of this immense country; the other, nearly on a level with the water which inundates it during a part of the year, forms a portion of the plain called Russia. The singular beauty of the contrast did not escape the glance of the Emperor Nicholas: that prince, with his characteristic sagacity, has also perceived that

Nijni is one of the most important points in his empire. He is very fond of this central spot, thus favoured by nature, and which has become the rendezvous of the most distant populations, who here congregate from all parts, drawn together by a powerful commercial interest. His Majesty has neglected nothing that could tend to beautify, enlarge, and enrich the city. The fair of Makarief, which was held formerly on the estate of a boyard twenty leagues below, following the course of the Volga towards Asia, was forfeited for the benefit of the crown and country; and the Emperor Alexander transferred it to Nijni. I regret the Asiatic fair held on the domains of a Muscovite prince: it must have been more original and picturesque, though less immense and regular, than the one I find here.

I have already said that every Russian city has its Kremlin, just as every Spanish city has its Alcazar. The Kremlin of Nijni, with its many-shaped towers, its pinnacles and embattled ramparts, which circle round a mountain far loftier than the hill of the Kremlin at Moscow, is nearly half a league in circumference.

When the traveller perceives this fortress from the plain he is struck with astonishment. It is the pharos, towards whose shining turrets and white walls, rising above the stunted forest pines, he shapes his course through the sandy deserts which defend the approach to Nijni on the side of Yaroslaf. The effect of this national architecture is always powerful: but here, the grotesque towers and Christian minarets, that constitute the ornament of all the kremlins, are heightened in effect by the striking character of the

site, which in certain places opposes real precipices to the creations of the architect. In the thickness of the walls have been worked, as at Moscow, staircases, which serve to ascend, from battlement to battlement, up to the very summit of the crowning ramparts. These commanding stairs, with the towers by which they are flanked, the slopes, the vaults, the arcades which sustain them, form a picture from whichsoever point of approach they are viewed.

The fair of Nijni, now become the most considerable in the world, is the rendezvous of people the least alike in person, costume, language, religion, and manners. Men from Thibet, from Bucharia, from the regions bordering upon China, come to meet Persians, Finns, Greeks, English, and Parisians: it is like the merchants' doomsday. The number of foreigners present at Nijni every day during the fair, exceeds two hundred thousand. The men who compose this yearly gathering come and go daily; but the number always continues pretty nearly the same: nevertheless, on certain days, there are at Nijni as many as three hundred thousand at the same time. The average consumption of bread in the pacific camp amounts to four hundred thousand pounds weight per day. Except at the season of this saturnalia of trade and industry, the city is lifeless. Nijni scarcely numbers twenty thousand stationary inhabitants, who are lost in its vast streets and naked squares during the nine months that the fair-ground remains forsaken.

The fair occasions little disorder. In Russia disorder is unknown: it would be a progressive movement, for it is the child of liberty. The love of gain,

and the ever-increasing need of luxuries, felt now by even barbarous nations, cause the semi-barbarous populations who resort here from Persia and Bucharia to recognise the advantages of orderly demeanour and good faith: besides, it must be admitted that in general the Mohammedans are upright in money matters.

Though I have only been a few hours in the city, I have already seen the governor. I had several flattering letters of introduction to him: he appears hospitable, and, for a Russian, open and communicative. His name is illustrious in the ancient history of Russia — it is that of Boutourline. The Boutourlines are a family of old boyards; a class of men that is becoming rare.

I have scarcely encountered any really dense crowd in Russia, except at Nijni, on the bridge over the Oka, the only road which leads from the city to the fair-ground, and the road also by which we approach Nijni from Yaroslaf. At the entrance of the fair you turn to the right to cross the bridge, leaving on the left the booths, and the temporary palace of the governor, a pavilion which forms a species of administrative observatory, whither he repairs every morning, and from whence he surveys all the streets, all the rows of shops, and presides over the general arrangements of the fair. The dust, the din, the carriages, the foot-passengers, the soldiers charged with maintaining order, greatly obstruct the passage of the bridge, whose use and character it is difficult at first to understand; for the surface of the water being covered by a multitude of boats, at the first glance, you suppose the river to be dry. The boats are so crowded together at the confluence of the Volga and the Oka

that the latter river may be crossed by striding from junk to junk. I use this Chinese word because a great portion of the vessels which resort to Nijni bring to the fair the merchandise, more especially the tea, of China.

Yesterday, on arriving, I expected that our horses would have run over twenty individuals before reaching the quay of the Oka, which is New Nijni, a suburb that will in a few years more be very extensive.

When I had gained the desired shore, I found that many other difficulties awaited me : before everything else it was necessary to find a lodging, and the inns were full. My feldjäger knocked at every door, and always returned with the same smile, ferocious by its very immobility, to tell me that he could not find a single chamber. He advised me to appeal to the hospitality of the governor; but this I was unwilling to do.

At length, arrived at the extremity of the long street that forms this suburb, at the foot of the steep hill which leads to the old city, and the summit of which is crowned by the Kremlin of Nijni, we perceived a coffee-house, the approach to which was obstructed by a covered public market, from whence exhaled odours that were anything but perfumes. Here I descended, and was politely received by the landlord, who conducted me through a series of apartments, all filled with men in pelisses, drinking tea and other liquors, until, by bringing me to the last room, he demonstrated to me that he had not one single chamber at liberty.

"This room forms the corner of your house," I observed: "has it a private entrance?"

"Yes."

"Very good: lock the door which separates it from the other apartments, and let me have it for a bed-chamber."

The air that I breathed already suffocated me. It was a mixture of the most opposite emanations: the grease of sheep-skins, the musk of dressed leather, the blacking of boots, cabbage, which is the principal food of the peasants, coffee, tea, liqueurs, and brandy, all thickened the atmosphere. The whole was poison: but what could I do? it was my last resource. I hoped, also, that after being cleared of its guests, swept and washed, the bad odours of the apartment would dissipate. I therefore insisted on the feldjäger clearly explaining my proposal to the keeper of the coffee-house.

"I shall lose by it," replied the man.

"I will pay you what you please; provided you also find somewhere a lodging for my valet and my courier."

The bargain was concluded; and here I am, quite proud of having taken by storm, in a dirty public-house, a room for which I have to pay more than the price of the finest apartment in the Hôtel des Princes, at Paris. It is only in Russia, in a country where the whims of men supposed to be powerful, know no obstacle, that one is able to convert, in a moment, the public hall of a coffee-house into a sleeping-apartment.

My feldjäger undertook to make the drinkers retire: they rose without offering the least objection, were

crowded into the next room, and the door was fastened upon them by the species of lock I have already mentioned. A score of tables filled up the chamber; but a swarm of priests in their robes, in other words, a troop of waiters in white shirts, precipitated themselves upon the furniture, and left me with bare walls in a few moments. But what a sight then met my eyes! Under each table, under every stool, multitudes of vermin were crawling, of a kind I have never before seen: they were black insects, about half an inch long, thick, soft, viscid, and tolerably nimble in their movements. This loathsome animal is known in a portion of Eastern Europe, in Volhynia, the Ukraine, Russia, and a part of Poland, where it is called, I believe, *persica*, because it was brought from Asia. I cannot make out the name given to it by the coffee-house waiters of Nijni. On seeing the floor of my chamber mottled over with these moving reptiles, crushed under the foot at every step, not by hundreds, but by thousands, and on perceiving the new kind of ill-savour exhaled by this massacre, I was seized with despair, fled from my chamber to the street, and proceeded to present myself to the governor. I did not re-enter my detestable lodging until assured that it had been rendered as clean as practicable. My bed, filled with fresh hay, was placed in the middle of the room, its four feet standing in earthern vessels full of water. Notwithstanding these precautions, I did not fail to find, on awaking from a restless, unrefreshing sleep, two or three persicas on my pillow. The reptiles are not noxious; but I cannot express the disgust with which they inspire me. The filthiness, the apathy, which

their presence in the habitations of man betrays, make me regret my journey to this part of the globe. I feel as though there were a moral degradation in being approached by these offal-bred creatures: physical antipathy triumphs over all the efforts of reason.

A merchant of Moscow, who has the most splendid and extensive silk-magazine in the fair, is coming this morning to take me over it, and to show me everything in detail.

I again find here the dust and suffocating heat of a southern clime. I was therefore well advised not to go on foot to the fair: but the concourse of strangers is at this time so great at Nijni, that I could not get a vehicle on hire; I was therefore obliged to use the by-no-means elegant one in which I arrived from Moscow, and to attach to it two horses only, which annoyed me as much as though I had been a Russian. It is not through vanity that they drive four horses: the animals have spirit, but they are not robust; they soon fatigue when they have much weight to draw.

On entering the carriage with the merchant who was so good as to act as my cicerone, and with his brother, I told my feldjäger to follow us. He, without hesitating or waiting to ask my permission, deliberately stepped into the calèche, and, with a coolness that amazed me, seated himself by the side of M.——'s brother, who, notwithstanding my expostulations, was determined to sit with his back to the horses. In this country it is not unusual to see the owner of

a carriage seated facing the horses, when even he is not by the side of a lady, whilst his friends place themselves opposite. This impoliteness, which would not be committed among us excepting where there was the strictest intimacy, here astonishes nobody.

Fearing lest the familiarity of the courier should shock my obliging companions, I considered it necessary to make this man remove; and told him, very civilly, to mount the seat by the side of the coachman.

"I shall do nothing of the kind," answered the feldjäger, with imperturbable sang-froid.

"What is the reason that you do not obey me?" I asked, in a yet calmer tone; for I know that among this half-oriental nation, it is necessary to maintain perfect impassibility in order to preserve your authority.

We spoke in German. "It would be a derogation," answered the Russian, in the same quiet tone.

This reminded me of the disputes about precedence among the boyards, which, under the reigns of the Ivans, were often so serious as to fill many pages of the Russian history of that epoch.

"What do you mean by a derogation?" I continued. "Is not that the place which you have occupied since we left Moscow?"

"It is true, sir, that is my place in travelling; but in taking a drive I ought to be in the carriage. I wear a uniform."

This uniform, which I have noticed elsewhere, is that of an agent of the post.

"I wear uniform, sir; I possess a rank in the

tchinn; I am not a private servant; I am in the employ of the emperor."

"I care very little what you are; though I never said to you that you were a servant."

"I should have the appearance of being one, were I to sit in that place when you take a ride in the city. I have been many years in service; and, as a recompense for my good conduct, they hold out to me the prospect of nobility: I am endeavouring to obtain it, for I am ambitious."

This confusion of our old aristocratic ideas with the new vanity instilled by despots into a people diseased with envy, took me by surprise. I had before me a specimen of the worst kind of emulation — that of the *parvenant* already giving himself the airs of the *parvenu!*

After a moment's silence, I answered: "I approve your pride, if it is well founded; but being little acquainted with the usages of your country, I shall, before allowing you to enter my coach, submit your claims to the governor. My intention is to require nothing from you beyond what you owe me in accordance with the orders given you when you were sent to me: in my uncertainty as to your pretensions, I dispense with your services for to-day; I shall proceed without you."

I felt inclined to laugh at the tone of importance with which I spoke; but I considered this dramatic dignity necessary to my comfort during the rest of the journey. There is nothing, however ridiculous, which may not be excused by the conditions and the inevitable consequences of despotism.

This aspirant to nobility, and scrupulous observer

of the etiquette of the highway, costs me, notwithstanding his pride, three hundred francs, in wages, per month. He reddened when he heard my last words, and, without making any reply, he left the carriage and re-entered the house in silence.

The ground on which the fair is held is very spacious; and I congratulated myself that I did not proceed to that city of a month on foot, for the heat continues to be great during a day in which the sun still darts his rays for fifteen hours.

The men of every land, but especially those of the extreme East, here meet together: these men are however more singular in name than in appearance. All the Asiatics resemble each other, or they may, at least, be divided into two classes: those having the faces of apes, as the Calmucs, Mongols, Baskirs, and Chinese; and those having the Greek profile, as the Circassians, Persians, Georgians, Indians, &c.

The fair of Nijni is held, as I have already said, on an immense triangle of sandy and perfectly level land, which runs to a point between the Oka, at its embouchure into the Volga, and the broad stream of the latter river. It is, therefore, bordered on either side by one of the two rivers. The soil upon which so immense an amount of wealth is heaped scarcely rises above the water. This merchant-city consists of a vast assemblage of long and broad streets: their perfect straightness injures their picturesque effect. A dozen of buildings called Chinese pavilions rise above the shops; but their fantastic style is not sufficient to correct the dulness and monotony of the general aspect of the edifices. The whole forms an oblong bazaar, which appears solitary, so vast is it in extent. The

dense crowds that obstruct the approaches disappear as soon as you penetrate the interior lines of stalls. The city of the fair is, like all the other modern Russian cities, too vast for its population, although that population, including the amphibious community scattered in boats on the river, and the flying camps which environ the fair, properly so called, amounts to 200,000 souls. The houses of the merchants stand upon a subterranean city, an immense vaulted sewer; in which labyrinth he would be lost who should attempt to penetrate without an experienced guide. Each street in the fair is doubled by a gallery, which follows its whole length, under earth, and serves as an issue for all refuse. The sewers are constructed of stone, and are cleansed several times daily, by a multitude of pumps, which introduce the water from the neighbouring rivers. They are entered by large and handsome stone staircases.

These catacombs of filth, which are also for the prevention of every thing offensive in the open streets, are placed under the charge of cossacks, who form its police, and who politely invite the individual to deseend. They are one of the most imposing works I have seen in Russia, and might suggest models to the constructors of the sewers at Paris. So much vastness and solidity reminds one of the descriptions of Rome. They were built by the Emperor Alexander, who, like his predecessors, pretended to conquer nature by establishing the fair on a soil inundated during one half of the year. He lavished millions in remedying the inconveniences of the injudicious choice made when the fair of Makarief was transported to Nijni.

The Oka, which separates the city of the fair from the permanent city, is here more than four times the breadth of the Seine. Forty thousand men sleep every night upon its bosom, making themselves nests in boats, which form a kind of floating camp. From the surface of the aquatic city rises, at evening, the heavy murmur of voices that might be easily taken for the gurgling of the waves. All these boats have masts, and form a river-forest, peopled by men from every corner of the earth: their faces and their costumes are equally strange. The sight has struck me more than any other in the immense fair. Rivers thus inhabited remind one of the descriptions of China.

Some of the peasants in this part of Russia wear white tunic shirts, ornamented with red borders: the costumes is borrowed from the Tartars. At night-time, the white linen gives them the appearance of spectres moving in the dark. Yet, notwithstanding its many singular and interesting objects, the fair of Nijni is not picturesque: it is a formal plan rather than a graceful sketch. The man devoted to political economy, or arithmetical calculations, has more business here than the poet or the painter: the subjects relate to the commercial balance and progress of the two principal quarters of the world — nothing more and nothing less. From one end of Russia to the other I perceive a minute, Dutch-taught government, hypocritically carrying on war against the primitive faculties of an ingenious, lively, poetical, oriental people, a people born for the arts.

The merchandise of every part of the world is collected in the immense streets of the fair; but it is

also lost in them. The scarcest objects are buyers. I have seen nothing yet in this country without exclaiming, "the people are too few for the space!" It is just the contrary in ancient communities, where the land fails the civilisation. The French and English stalls are the most elegant; while viewing them, the beholder might fancy himself at Paris or at London: but this Bond-street of the East, this Palais Royal of the steppes, does not constitute the real wealth of the market of Nijni. To have a just idea of the importance of this fair it is necessary to recollect its origin, and the place where it was first held. Before flourishing at Makarief it was established at Kazan: the two extremes of the ancient world, western Europe and China, met in that ancient capital of Russian Tartary to exchange their various products. This is now done at Nijni. But a very incomplete idea of a market for the commodities of two continents would be formed, if the spectator did not leave the regular stalls and elegant pavilions which adorn the modern bazaar of Alexander, and survey some of the different camps by which it is flanked. The line and rule do not follow the merchant into the suburbs of the fair: these suburbs are like the farm-yard of a château — however stately and orderly the principal habitation, the disorder of nature reigns in its dependencies.

It is no easy task to traverse, even rapidly, these exterior depôts, for they are themselves each as large as cities. A continual and really imposing activity pervades them, — a true mercantile chaos, which it is needful to see in order to believe.

To commence with the city of tea: It is an Asiatic

camp, which extends on the banks of the two rivers to the point of land where they meet. The tea comes from China by Kiatka, which is in the back part of Asia. At this first depôt it is exchanged for merchandise, and from thence transported in packages, which resemble small chests, in the shape of dice, about two feet deep every way. These packages are frames, covered with skins; the buyers thrust into them a kind of probe, by withdrawing which they ascertain the quality of the article. From Kiatka the tea travels by land to Tomsk; it is there placed in boats, and sails along several rivers, of which the Irtish and the Tobol are the principal, till it arrives at Tourmine, from whence it is again transported by land to Perm, in Siberia, where it is re-shipped on the Kama, which carries it into the Volga, and up that river it ascends to Nijni. Russia receives yearly 75,000 or 80,000 chests of tea, one half of which remains in Siberia, to be transported to Moscow during the winter, by sledges, and the other half arrives at this fair.

The principal tea-merchant in Russia is the individual who wrote for me the above itinerary. I do not answer for either the orthography or the geography of that opulent man; but a millionnaire is generally correct, for he buys the science of others.

It will be seen that this famous tea of the caravans, so delicate, as is said, because it comes over-land, travels nearly always by water: to be sure, it is fresh water; and the mists of rivers do not produce such effects as the ocean fogs.

Forty thousand chests of tea is an amount easily named; but the reader can have no idea of the time it

takes to survey them, though it be only by passing before the piles of boxes. This year, thirty-five thousand were sold in three days. A single individual, my geographical merchant, took fourteen thousand, which cost him ten million silver roubles (paper roubles are not current here), a part payable down, the rest in one year.

It is the rate of tea which fixes the price of all the commodities of the fair: before this rate is published, the other bargains are only made conditionally.

There is another city as large, but less elegant, and less perfumed than the city of tea — that, namely, of rags. Fortunately, before bringing the tatters of all Russia to the fair, those into whose hands they have fallen, cause them to be washed. This commodity, necessary to the manufacture of paper, has become so precious, that the Russian custom-house forbids the exportation with extreme severity.

Another town which attracted my attention among the suburbs, was that of barked timber. Like the faubourgs of Vienna, these secondary cities are larger than the principal. The one of which I speak serves as a magazine for the wood, brought from Siberia, destined to form the wheels of the Russian carts, and the collars of the horses — those semicircles formed of a single piece of bended wood, which are seen fixed in so picturesque a manner at the extremities of the shafts, and which rise above the heads of all the shaft-horses in the empire. The store necessary to furnish these wheels and collars to Western Russia forms here, mountains of wood, of which our timber-yards at Paris cannot give even an idea.

Another city, and it is, I believe, the most extensive and curious of all, serves as a depôt for the iron of Siberia. I walked for a quarter of a league under galleries, in which are to be found, artistically arranged, every known species of iron bar, grating, and wrought iron; pyramids built of the utensils of husbandry and house-keeping, magazines full of vessels of cast-iron; in short, a city of the metal which forms one of the principal sources of the wealth of the empire. The sight of such wealth made me shudder. How many criminals must it not have required to dig up those treasures? and if there are not criminals enough in that subterranean world which produces iron, their number is made up by the unfortunate victims of despotism. The system which regulates the miners of the Ural would be a curious subject of inquiry, if it were permitted, to foreigners. But the means of pursuing this study would be as difficult for an European from the West as the journey to Mecca is for a Christian.

All these towns form only chapels-of-ease to the principal fair, round which, as a common centre, they extend without any plan or order. Their outer, or general circumference, would equal that of the larger European capitals. A day would not afford sufficient time to pass through all the temporary suburbs. Amid such an abyss of riches it is impossible to see everything; the spectator is obliged to select.

I must abridge my descriptions. In Russia we resign ourselves to monotony; it is a condition of existence: but in France, where I shall be read, I have no right to expect the reader to submit to it with the same good grace that I do here. He has not the

same obligation to be patient as he would have if he had travelled a thousand leagues to learn the practice of that virtue of the vanquished.

I forgot to notice a city of cashmere wool. In seeing this vile, dusty hair, bound in enormous bales, I thought of the beautiful shoulders that it would one day cover; the splendid attires that, when transformed into shawls, it would complete.

I saw also a city of furs, and another of potash. I use this word city purposely; it alone can give an idea of the extent of the various depôts which surround the fair, and which invest it with a character of grandeur that no other fair will ever possess.

Such a commercial phenomenon could only be produced in Russia. To create a fair like Nijni requires that there should be an extreme desire for luxuries among tribes still half barbarous, living in countries separated by incommensurable distances, without prompt or easy means of communication, and where the inclemency of the seasons isolate the population during a great part of the year. The combination of these, and doubtless many other circumstances which I do not discern, could alone induce commercial people to submit to the difficulties, expenses, and personal fatigues of annually resorting, and of bringing all the riches of the soil and of industry to one single point of the country, at a fixed season. The time may be predicted, and I think it is not far distant, when the progress of material civilisation in Russia will greatly diminish the importance of the fair of Nijni, at present, as I have already said, the largest in the world.

In a suburb, separated by an arm of the Oka, is a

Persian village, the shops of which are filled exclusively with Persian merchandise. Among these objects I more particularly admired the carpets, which appeared magnificent, the raw silk, and the termolama, a species of silk-cashmere, manufactured, they say, only in Persia.

The forms and dress of the Persians do not greatly strike in this country, where the indigenous population is itself Asiatic, and preserves traces of its origin.

I also traversed a city destined solely as a receptacle for the dried and salted fish which are sent from the Caspian Sea for the Russian Lents.* The Greek devotees are great consumers of these aquatic mummies. Four months of abstinence among the Muscovites enriches the Mohammedans of Persia and Tartary. This city of fishes is situated on the borders of the river: some of the fish are piled upon earth, the remainder lay within the holds of the vessels that brought them. The dead bodies, heaped together in millions, exhale, even in the open air, a disagreeable perfume. Another division forms the city of leather, an article of the first importance at Nijni; as enough is brought there to supply the consumption of all the West of Russia.

Another is the city of furs. The skins of every animal may be seen there, from the sable, the blue fox, and certain bear skins — to obtain a pelisse of which costs twelve thousand francs, — to the common foxes and wolves, which cost nothing. The keepers of the treasures make themselves tents for the night with their merchandise, savage lairs, the aspect of

* There are four Lents in the Greek church. — *Trans.*

which is picturesque. These men, although they inhabit cold countries, live on little, clothe lightly, and sleep in the open air in fine weather. They are the true lazzaronis of the north, though less gay, witty, or buffoonish, and more dirty than those of Naples; because, to the uncleanliness of their persons is added that of their garments, which they never take off.

What I have already written will serve to give an idea of the exterior of the fair: the interior, I repeat, is much less interesting. Without, are cars and trucks moving amid a crowd where reign disorder, cries, songs, and, in short, liberty: within are regularity, silence, solitude, order, the police, and, in one word, Russia! Immense files of houses, or rather stalls, separate about a dozen long and broad streets, which terminate in a Russian church and in twelve Chinese pavilions. The united length of all the streets and alleys of the fair, properly so called, and without speaking of the faubourgs, is ten leagues.

The Emperor Alexander, after having selected the new ground for the fair, ordered the necessary works for its establishment, but he never saw it. He was ignorant of the immense sums that had to be added to his budget to make this low land fitted to the use for which it was destined. By means of amazing efforts and enormous expenditure the fair is now habitable during summer, which is all that is required for commerce. But it is not the less badly situated; being rendered dusty or miry by the first ray of sun, or smallest rain, and remaining unhealthy at all times; which is no small evil for the merchants obliged to sleep above their magazines for the space of six weeks.

Notwithstanding the taste of the Russians for straight lines, many think with me that it would have been better to have placed the fair by the side of the old city on the crest of the mountain, the summit of which might have been rendered accessible by gentle, terraced slopes. At the foot of the hill, on the borders of the Oka, the objects too heavy and bulky to be carried up, might have still remained, by the side of their vessels, while the livelier, retail fair would have been held on a spacious platform at the gate of the lofty city. Imagine a hill crowded with the representatives of all the Asiatic and European nations. Such a peopled mountain would have produced a grand effect: the marsh, where the travelling population now swarms, produces very little.

The modern engineers, so skilful in all lands, would then have had whereon to exercise their talents; the poets, the painters, the admirers of noble sites and picturesque effects, the sight-seers, who are become quite a nation in this century, in which the abuses of activity produce fanatics in idleness, — all these men, useful through the money which they expend, would have enjoyed a magnificent promenade, far more attractive than that afforded them in a bazaar where no point of view can be gained, and where the air breathed is mephitic; while it merits consideration, that such a result would have been obtained at much less expenditure of money than it has cost the emperor to establish his aquatic fair.

The Russian peasants are the principal commercial agents in this prodigious market. Nevertheless, the law forbids the serf to ask, or the freemen to grant him, a credit of more than *five roubles*. And yet they

deal with some of these people, on the strength of their word only, for two hundred thousand — five hundred thousand francs; and the dates for payment are very distant. These slavish millionnaires, these Aguados of the glebe, do not know how to read. In Russia it is requisite that the men should possess great natural intelligence, to supply the want of acquired. The people are very ignorant of arithmetic. For centuries they have reckoned their accounts by frames, containing series of movable balls. Every line has its colour; each indicates units, tens, hundreds, &c. This mode of calculation is sure and rapid.

It must not be forgotten that the lord of these enormously-wealthy serfs could despoil them in a day of all they possess, provided he did not injure their persons. Such acts of violence, it is true, are rare, but they are possible.

No one remembers that any merchant ever suffered by his confidence in the peasants with whom he dealt: so true it is, that in every society, if only it be stable, the progress of morals corrects the faults of institutions.

I have, however, been told that, on the other hand, the father of a Count Tcheremitcheff, who is now living, once promised liberty to a family of peasants, in consideration of the exorbitant sum of 50,000 roubles. He received the money, and retained among his serfs the despoiled family.

Such is the school of good faith and probity in which the Russian peasants are instructed, under the aristocratic despotism, which crushes them in spite of the autocratic despotism which governs them, and

which is often powerless against its rival. Imperial pride contents itself with words, forms, and numbers; aristocratic ambition aims at things, and makes a profit of words. Never did a master receive more adulation and less obedience than the deceived, *soi-disant* absolute sovereign of the Russian empire: disobedience is indeed perilous; but the country is vast, and solitude is dumb.

The governor of Nijni, M. Boutourline, has very politely invited me to dine with him daily during my stay in the city: to-morrow he will explain to me how conduct similar to that of Count Tcheremitcheff, rare everywhere and in every age, cannot be now repeated in Russia. I will give the summary of his conversation, if I can make anything out of it; for hitherto I have gathered little from the lips of the Russians but confused language. Is this owing to the want of logical minds, or is it done purposely, with the view of perplexing foreigners? It is, I believe, attributable to both causes. By continually endeavouring to hide truth from the eyes of others, people become at last unable to perceive it themselves, except through a veil which daily thickens.

Nothing is cheap at the fair of Nijni, except articles that no one cares to buy. The epoch of great differences in price in different localities, is passed: everywhere the value of things is known: the Tartars themselves, who come from the centre of Asia to Nijni to pay very dear for the objects of luxury supplied by Paris and London, bring, in exchange, commodities of which they perfectly well know the value. The merchants may still avail themselves of the situation of the buyers to refuse them articles at a just

price; but they cannot deceive them. Yet they do not abate their prices; they coolly ask too much; and their probity consists in never departing from their most exaggerated demands.

In a financial point of view, the importance of the fair continues to increase yearly; but the interest which attaches to the singularity and picturesque appearance of the assemblage diminishes. In general, the fair of Nijni would disappoint the lover of the grotesque and the amusing. Every thing is dull, stiff, and regular in Russia, except, at least, in moments when the long-repressed instinct of liberty bursts forth in an explosion: then the peasants roast their lord, or the lord marries his slave; but these rare outbreaks are little talked of: the distances and the measures taken by the police prevent isolated facts being circulated among the mass.

In my promenades through the central portion of the fair I saw the Bucharians. These people inhabit a corner of Thibet bordering upon China. They come to Nijni to sell precious stones. The turquoises that I bought from them are as dear as those sold in Paris; and all stones of any value are equally high in price. The dealers in these stones pass the year in their journey, for it takes them, they say, more than eight months to go and come only. Neither their persons nor dress struck me as very remarkable. I scarcely believe in the genuineness of the Chinese at Nijni; but the Tartars, Persians, Kirguises, and Calmucs suffice for curiosity.

The two last-named barbarians bring, from the solitudes of their steppes, herds of small wild horses to sell at the fair. These animals have many good

qualities, both physical and moral; but their make does not recommend them. They are, nevertheless, excellent for the saddle; and their character causes them to be valued. Poor creatures! they have better hearts than many men: they love each other with a tenderness and a passion that prevents them from ever voluntarily separating. So long as they remain together they forget exile and slavery, and seem to believe themselves in their own country. When one is sold, he has to be cast, and forcibly dragged with cords out of the enclosure where his brethren are confined, who, during this violence, never cease attempting to escape or rebel, and to neigh piteously. Never have I seen the horses of our own country show so many proofs of sensibility. I have seldom been more affected than I was yesterday, by the sight of these unhappy creatures, torn from the freedom of the desert, and violently separated from those they love. I may be answered by the line of Gilbert:

Un papillon souffrant lui fait verser des larmes.

but I shall not care for being laughed at, feeling sure that if the reader had seen the carrying-out of these cruel bargains he would have shared my feeling. Crime, when recognised as such by the laws, has its judges in this world; but permitted cruelty is only punished by the pity of kindly-disposed people for the victims, and, I hope also, by Divine equity. It is this tolerated barbarity which makes me regret the narrow limits of my eloquence: a Rousseau or a Sterne would know how to make the reader weep over the fate of these poor Kirguis horses, destined to carry, in Europe, men as much slaves as themselves, but whose condition

does not always deserve as great pity as that of the enslaved brute.

Towards evening the aspect of the plain became imposing. The horizon was lightly veiled in mist, which afterwards fell in dew on the dust of Nijni, a kind of fine brown sand, the reflection of which imparted to the heavens a reddish tint. The depths of the shade were pierced by the fantastic light of a multitude of lamps in the bivouacs by which the fair was surrounded. *Everything had a voice;—from the distant forest, from the bosom of the inhabited river*, a murmur brought to the attentive ear the sounds of life. What an imposing gathering together of mankind! what different languages and contrasting habits! and yet what uniformity of sentiments and ideas. The object of this great meeting, of each individual it comprised, was simply to gain a little money. Elsewhere the gaiety of the people conceals their cupidity; here commerce stands naked, and the sterile rapacity of the merchant predominates over the frivolity of the lounger: nothing is poetical; everything is mercenary. I am wrong,—the poetry of fear and of sorrow is at the bottom of everything in this country: but where is the voice that dares express it? Nevertheless, there are a few pictures to console the imagination and to refresh the eye.

On the roads which connect the different merchant-encampments, may be seen long files of singular vehicles, being pairs of wheels united by an axle, which, when attached to others, so as to form an equipage of four or six wheels, had served to carry the beams and poles used in the construction of some of the temporary erections of the fair. They return

thus detached, drawn by one horse, guided by men who stand upright on the axle, balancing themselves with a savage grace, and managing their half-broken steeds with a dexterity I have seen nowhere but in Russia. They remind me of the charioteers of the Byzantian circus; their shirts form a Greek tunic that is truly antique. As the Russian female peasants are the only women on earth who make themselves a waist above the bosom, so are their male relatives the only men I have ever seen who wear their shirts over their pantaloons.

In wandering at night about the fair, I was struck with the brilliancy of the eating-booths, the little theatres, the taverns, and the coffee-houses. But from the midst of so much light there rose no sound save a dull suppressed murmur; and the contrast formed by the illumination of the place, and the taciturnity of the people, gave the idea of magic. I could have believed the human beings had been touched by the wand of an enchanter. The men of Asia continue grave and serious, even in their diversions: and the Russians are Asiatics, drilled, but not civilised.

I am never tired of hearing their popular songs. The value of music is doubled in a place where a hundred different communities are drawn together by their common interests, though divided by their language and religion. When speech serves only to separate men, they sing to understand each other. Music is the antidote of sophistry; whence the ever-increasing vogue of this art in Europe. There is, in the pieces executed by the mugics of the Volga, an extraordinary complexity, evolving effects of harmony which, notwithstanding, or perhaps owing to

their rudeness, we should call scientific in a church or a theatre. These melodies are not sweetly inspired; but, at a distance, the numerous voices counteracting each other in choruses, remarkable for the mournfulness of the accords, produce a novel and profound impression upon us Western people. The plaintive sadness of the sounds is not diminished by the decoration of the scene. A thick forest of masts bounds the view on two sides; on the other, a solitary plain, lost in a forest of firs: by degrees the lights are seen to diminish; at length they become extinguished; the obscurity heightens the effect of the eternal silence of these pale regions, and spreads in the soul a new surprise: night is the mother of astonishment. All the scenes that a short time before animated the desert are effaced; vague recollections succeed to the movements of life; and the traveller finds himself alone with the Russian police, who render the darkness doubly fearful: he believes himself in a dream, and regains his lodging, his mind full of poetry, that is, of a vague fear, and of mournful presentiments. It is impossible for a moment to forget, while travelling over Russia, that the people are Orientals, who in their former migrations lost their road, and whose chiefs, by mistake, led towards the north, a people born to live in the sun.

CHAP. XXXIV.

FINANCIAL PHENOMENON.—FINANCIAL REFORM OF THE EMPEROR'S. —MEANS TAKEN BY THE GOVERNOR OF NIJNI TO INDUCE THE MERCHANTS TO OBEY. — THEIR NOMINAL COMPLIANCE. — ENQUIRY INTO THEIR MOTIVES. — IMPROVEMENTS AT NIJNI. — THE SERF AND THE LORD. — THE GOVERNOR OF NIJNI'S EXPLANATIONS OF DESPOTIC ADMINISTRATION. — FORBEARANCE OF THE AUTHORITIES. — A RIDE WITH THE GOVERNOR. — VALUE OF THE COMMODITIES AT THE FAIR OF NIJNI. — PORTRAIT OF FRENCHMEN OF THE NEW SCHOOL. — AN AGREEABLE RENCONTRE. — DINNER AT THE GOVERNOR'S. — ENGLISH ODDITIES. — ANECDOTE TOLD BY A POLISH LADY. — THE UTILITY OF EASY MANNERS. — VISITS WITH THE GOVERNOR. — THE BUREAUCRACY. — THE AUTHOR'S FELDJÄGER. — FLAG OF MININE. — BAD FAITH OF THE GOVERNMENT. — MODERN VANDALISM. — PETER THE GREAT. — FRENCH CHARACTER. — THE TRUE GLORY OF NATIONS. — THE KREMLIN OF NIJNI. — THE GOVERNOR'S CAMP. — SONG OF THE SOLDIERS. — CHURCH OF THE STROGONOFFS. — RUSSIAN VAUDEVILLE.

THIS year, immediately before opening the fair, the governor called around him the ablest commercial heads in Russia, then assembled together at Nijni, and laid before them, in detail, the long-ago-acknowledged and deplored inconveniences of the monetary system of the empire.

The reader is aware that there are in Russia two representative signs of commodities—paper and silver money; but he, perhaps, does not know that the latter, by a singularity that is unique, I believe, in financial history, is constantly varying in value, whilst the worth of the former remains fixed. Nothing but a

profound study of the political economy of the country could explain another very extraordinary fact resulting from this singularity, namely, that in Russia, the specie represents the paper, although the latter was only instituted, and only legally exists to represent the former.

Having explained this anomaly to his auditors, and expatiated on all the mischievous consequences arising therefrom, the governor added that the emperor, in his constant solicitude for his people and for the order of his empire, had at length determined to put an end to a disorder, the progress of which threatened seriously to cripple the internal commerce of the land. The only remedy recognised as efficient is the definite and irrevocable fixing of the value of the coined rouble. The edict of the emperor accomplished this revolution in one day, as far at least as words could do it; but in order to realise the reform, the governor concluded his harangue by announcing that it was his majesty's will that the ukase should be immediately put in execution; and he added that the superior agents of the administration, and he, the governor of Nijni, in particular, hoped that no consideration of personal interest would prevail against the duty of obeying, without delay, the supreme will of the empire's head.

The honest men consulted on this serious question, replied that the measure, though good in itself, would destroy the most secure commercial fortunes if it were applied to transactions and bargains already made, and the terms of which would have to be fulfilled during the actual fair. While continuing to laud and admire the profound wisdom of the emperor, they

humbly represented to the governor that those among the merchants who had effected sales of goods at a price fixed according to the ancient rate of money, which they had done, acting in dependence upon the relations between the paper and the silver rouble being continued as they were at the last fair, would be exposed to the necessity of submitting to payments that would be not the less fraudulent because authorised by the law, since they would rob them of their just profits, and might ruin them if the present edict were allowed a retro-active effect; the consequences of which would be a multitude of small bankruptcies, that would not fail finally to draw in the others.

The governor replied, with the gentleness and calmness which presides in Russia throughout all administrative, financial, and political discussions, that he *perfectly* entered into the views of the chief merchants interested in the business of the fair; but that, after all, the mischievous results dreaded by these gentlemen only threatened a few individuals, *who would have, as a guarantee, the severity of the existing laws against bankrupts*, whereas, on the other hand, a delay would always look something like resistance; and that such example, given by the most important commercial place in the empire, would involve inconveniences far more injurious to the country than a few failures, affecting only a small number of individuals; for disobedience, approved and justified by men who had hitherto enjoyed the confidence of the government, would be an attack aimed at the dignity of the sovereign, at the administrative and financial *unity* of Russia, or, in other words, at the vital principles of the empire: he added,

that, under these peremptory considerations, he did not doubt the gentlemen addressed would, by their compliance, hasten to avoid the *monstrous* reproach of sacrificing the good of the state to their personal interests.

The result of this *pacific* conference was that, on the morrow, the fair opened under the *retro-active* system of the new ukase, the solemn publication of which was made after the assent and the promises of the first merchants in the empire had been thus obtained.

This was related to me by the governor himself, with the intention of proving to me the gentleness with which the machine of despotic government works —that machine so calumniated by people governed under liberal institutions.

I took the liberty of asking my obliging and interesting preceptor in oriental politics, what had been the result of the government measure, and of the cavalier manner in which it was judged right to put it in execution.

"The result has exceeded my hopes," replied the governor, with a satisfied air. "Not one bankrupt! ...All the new bargains have been concluded under the new monetary system; but what will surprise you is the fact, that no debtor has availed himself, in paying his old engagements, of the power which the law gave him of defrauding his creditors."

I confess that at the first view this result appeared to me astounding; but, on reflection, I recognised the astuteness of the Russians: the law being published, it was obeyed—on paper; and that is enough for the government. It is easily satisfied, I admit.

for what it principally requires, at whatever cost, is silence. The political state of Russia may be defined in one sentence: it is a country in which the government says what it pleases, because it alone has the right to speak. Thus, in the case before us, the government says — Such is the law — obey it; but, nevertheless, the mutual accord of interested parties annuls the action of this law in that iniquitous portion of it which could be applied to old debts. In a country where the governing power is patient, it would not have exposed the honest man to the danger of being deprived of his due by thieves: in justice, the law can only regulate the future. And, indeed, theory apart, such is the result here; but to obtain it, it was necessary that the sense and good management of the subjects should be opposed to the blind impetuosity of the authorities, in order to escape the evils which would otherwise be entailed on the country by these freaks of supreme power.

There exists in all governments built on exaggerated theories, a concealed action, a *de-facto* influence, which nearly always opposes the extravagant doctrine adopted. The Russians possess in a high degree the spirit of commerce, which will explain how it was that the merchants of the fair perceived that the real tradesman thrives only by acting, and by being able to act, in confidence, — every sacrifice of credit is a loss to him of cent. per cent. Nor was this all; another influence checked bad faith, and made blind cupidity silent. The temptation that might have been felt by the insolvent would be repressed purely by fear—that real sovereign of Russia. On this occasion, the evil-intentioned will have thought that if they exposed

themselves to any process, or even to too notorious animadversion, the judges or the police would turn against them; and that, in such case, what is here called law would be applied with rigour. They have dreaded incarceration, the blows of the rod in the prison, or, perhaps, something worse! Under these motives, operating with double influence in the universal silence that forms the normal state of Russia, they have given this good example of commercial probity, with which the governor of Nijni took pleasure in dazzling me. If I was dazzled, it was only for an instant; for I was not long in recognising that if the Russian merchants forbore to ruin each other, their reciprocal moderation had precisely the same source as that of the boatmen of Lake Ladoga, and the coachmen and porters of Petersburg, who control their angry passions, not through motives of humanity, but under the dread of the superior authority intervening in their affairs. As I remained silent, I could see that M. Boutourline enjoyed my surprise.

"No one knows the superiority of the emperor," he continued, "unless they have seen this prince engaged in public business, especially at Nijni, where he performs prodigies."

I answered that I greatly admired the sagacity of the emperor.

"When we visit together the works directed by his majesty," replied the governor, "you will yet more admire him. You will see that, owing to the energy of his character and the justness of his views, the monetary revolution, which would elsewhere

have required infinite precaution, works among us as if by enchantment."

The courtier-like governor had the modesty to forbear adding a word in favour of his own good management; he equally avoided giving me any occasion to allude to what evil tongues are continually repeating to me in secret, namely, that every financial measure of the kind just taken by the Russian government, gives to the superior authority, means of profit, which it well knows how to use, but of which no one dares openly to complain under autocratic rule. I am ignorant of the secret manœuvres to which recourse has been had on this occasion; but to give myself an idea of them, I imagine the situation of a man who has deposited with another a considerable sum of money. If the receiver has the power to triple the value of each piece of coin of which the sum is composed, it is clear that he can return the deposit, and all the while retain two thirds of the amount deposited. I do not say that such has been the actual result of the measure ordained by the emperor, but I admit the supposition, among many others, to aid me in comprehending the insinuations, or, if you like, the calumnies of the malcontents. They, indeed, add that the profit of this so suddenly executed operation, which consists in depriving, by a decree, the paper-money of a part of its ancient value, to increase in the same proportion that of the silver rouble, is designed to compensate the private treasury of the sovereign for the sums which it was necessary to draw from it, in order to re-build, *at his own cost*, his winter-palace, and to refuse, with a magnanimity which Europe and Russia have admired, the offers of

towns and of many private individuals, great merchants, and others, emulous of contributing to the re-construction of a national edifice which serves as habitation for the head of the empire.

The reader may judge, by the detail which I have deemed it my duty to give of this tyrannical charlatanism, of the value here attached to words, and of the real worth of the noblest sentiments and the finest phrases. He may judge also of the constraint imposed upon generous minds and independent spirits, obliged to live under a system in which peace and order are purchased by the sacrifice of truth—that most sacred of all the gifts of heaven to man. In other communities, it is the people who apply the whip, and the government which puts on the drag; here, it is the government which urges onward and the people who hold back: for if the political machine is to keep together at all, it is essential that the spirit of conservatism should exist in some part of it. The displacement of ideas which I here note is a political phenomenon, which I have never seen except in Russia. Under an absolute despotism it is the government which is revolutionary; for the word revolution signifies arbitrary system and violent power.

The governor has kept his promise. He has taken me to see and minutely examine the works ordered by the emperor, with the view of making Nijni all that it is capable of being made, and of repairing the errors of its founders. A superb road rises from the banks of the Oka to the high city, the precipices are filled up, the terraces are laid out, magnificent openings are cut even in the bosom of the mountain,

where enormous substructures support squares, streets, and edifices; bridges are constructed; and all these works, worthy of a great commercial city, will soon change Nijni into one of the most beautiful in the empire. As his Majesty has taken it under his special protection, each time that any small difficulty rises as to the mode of carrying on the works commenced, or whenever the face of an old house is to be repaired or a new one to be built, the governor is instructed to cause a special plan to be made, and to submit the question of its adoption to the emperor. What a man! exclaim the Russians .... What a country! I should exclaim, if I dared to speak.

While on the road, M. Boutourline, whose obliging civility and hospitality I cannot sufficiently acknowledge, gave me some interesting explanations of the Russian system of administration, and of the improvement which the progress of manners is daily effecting in the condition of the peasants.

A serf may now become the proprietor even of lands, in the name of his lord, without the latter daring to violate the *moral* guarantee by which he is bound to his wealthy slave. To despoil this man of the fruit of his labour and industry would be an abuse of power which the most tyrannical boyard dare not permit himself under the reign of the Emperor Nicholas: but who shall assure me that he dare not do so under another sovereign? Who shall assure me even, that, in spite of the return to equity which forms the glorious characteristic of the present reign, there may yet be no avaricious and needy lords, who, without openly robbing their vassals, know how skilfully, and by turns, to employ threats and kindness,

in order gradually to extract from the hands of the slave a portion of the wealth which they dare not carry away at one swoop? It is difficult to believe in the duration of such relations between the master and the serf, and yet the institutions which produce this social singularity are stable.

In Russia nothing is defined by the proper words. In theory, every thing is precisely as is said; but under such a system, if carried out, life would be impossible: in practice there are so many exceptions, that we are ready to say, the confusion caused by customs and usages so contradictory must make all government impossible.

It is necessary to discover the solution of the double problem; the point, that is, where the principle and the application, the theory and the practice, accord, to form a just idea of the state of society in Russia.

If we are to believe the excellent governor of Nijni, nothing can be more simple: the habit of exercising the power renders the forms of command gentle and easy. Angry passions, ill treatment, the abuses of authority, are become extremely rare, precisely because social order is based upon extremely severe laws; every one feels that to preserve for such laws a respect without which the state would be overthrown, they should not be put in force frequently or rashly. It is requisite that the action of despotic government be observed close at hand to understand all its gentleness (it is the governor of Nijni who now speaks): if authority preserves any force in Russia, it is to be attributed to the moderation of the men who exercise it. Constantly placed between an aristocracy which the more easily abuses its power be-

cause its prerogatives are ill-defined, and a people who the more willingly misunderstand their duty because the obedience exacted from them is not ennobled by a moral feeling, the men who command can only preserve the *prestige* of sovereignty by using as rarely as possible violent means: these means would expose the measure of the government's strength; and it judges it wiser to conceal than to unveil its resources. If a noble commits any reprehensible act, he would be several times warned in secret by the governor of the province before being admonished officially. If warnings and reprimands were not sufficient, the tribunal of the nobles would threaten to place him under guardianship; and if this had no good effect, the menace would be executed.

All this superabundance of precaution does not appear to me to be very consolatory to the serf, who, if he had as many lives, might die a hundred times under the knout of his master, before the latter, thus prudently warned and duly admonished, should be obliged to give account of his injustices or his atrocities. It is true that the day after, lord, governor, and judges might be all sent to Siberia; but this would be rather a consolation for the imagination of the poor peasants than a real protection from the arbitrary acts of subaltern authorities, who are ever disposed to abuse the power delegated to them.

The common people have very rarely recourse to the legal tribunals in their private disputes. This enlightened instinct appears to me a sure indication of want of equity in the judges. The infrequency of litigation may have two causes — the spirit of justice in the subjects, or the spirit of iniquity in the judges.

In Russia, nearly every process is stifled by an administrative decision, which very often *recommends* an arrangement onerous to both parties, who prefer the reciprocal sacrifice of a part of their claims, and even of their best founded rights, to the danger of proceeding against the advice of a man invested with authority by the emperor. This is the reason why the Russians have grounds for boasting that there is very little litigation in their land. Fear produces everywhere the same result — peace without tranquillity.

Will not the reader feel some compassion for a traveller lost in a country where facts are not more conclusive than words? The fictions of the Russians have upon me an effect precisely the contrary to that intended: I see at the very outset the design to blind and dazzle me; I therefore stand upon my guard; and the consequence is, that instead of being the impartial spectator that I should have been but for their vain boasting, I become, in spite of myself, an unfriendly observer.

The governor was also pleased himself to show me the fair; but this time, we made the tour of it rapidly, in a carriage. I admired one point of view that was worthy of forming a panorama. To enjoy the magnificent picture, we ascended the summit of one of the Chinese pavilions, which commands an entire view of the city of a month. I was there more especially struck with the immensity of the piles of wealth annually accumulated on this point of land — a focus of industry the more remarkable, because it is lost, as it were, in the midst of deserts without bounds either to the eye or the imagination.

The governor informs me that the value of the merchandise brought this year to the fair of Nijni exceeds one hundred and fifty millions*, according to the manifestoes of the merchants themselves, who, with the mistrust natural to Orientals, always conceal a part of the value of their stock.

Although all the countries in the world send the tribute of their soil and industry to Nijni, the principal importance of this annual market is owing to its being a depot for the provisions, the precious stones, the stuffs, and the furs of Asia. The wealth of the Tartars, the Persians, and the Bucharians, is the object which most strikes the imagination of the strangers attracted by the reputation of the fair; yet, notwithstanding its commercial importance, I, as merely a curious observer, find it below its reputation. They reply to this, that the Emperor Alexander spoiled its picturesque and amusing aspect. He rendered the streets which separate the stalls more spacious and regular; but such stiffness is dull: besides, everything is gloomy and silent in Russia; everywhere the reciprocal distrust of government and people banishes mirth. Every passion and every pleasure has to answer for its consequences to some rigid confessor, disguised as an agent of police; every Russian is a school-boy liable to the rod; all Russia is a vast college, where discipline is enforced by severe and rigid rule, until constraint and ennui, becoming insupportable, occasion here and there an outbreak. When this takes place, it is a regular

* The author does not state whether these are francs or roubles. — *Trans.*

political saturnalia; but, once again, the acts of violence are isolated, and do not disturb the general quiet. That quiet is the more stable, and appears the more firmly established, because it resembles death: it is only living things that can be exterminated. In Russia, respect for despotism is confounded with the idea of eternity.

I find several Frenchmen assembled together at Nijni. Notwithstanding my passionate love for France, for that land which, in my vexation with the extravagancies of its inhabitants, I have so often abandoned with the vow never to return, but to which I return always, and where I hope to die,—notwithstanding this blind patriotism, I have never ceased, since I first travelled and encountered in foreign lands a crowd of countrymen, to recognise the impertinence of the young French, and to feel astonished on observing the strong relief in which our faults stand forth among foreigners. If I speak only of the younger men, it is because at their age the stamp upon the mind, being less worn away by the rubs of life, the exhibition of character is the more striking. It must then be owned that our young countrymen invite a laugh at their own expense, by the sincerity with which they imagine that they dazzle the simple men of other nations. French superiority, a superiority so well established in their eyes that it does not require even to be proved, is the axiom upon which they support themselves. This unshaking faith in their own personal merit, this self-love, so completely at ease, that it would become ingenuous through its very confidence, if so much credulity did not generally unite itself, in hideous combination, with scoffing and

sneering self-sufficiency; this knowledge, for the most part devoid of imagination, which turns the intellect into a storehouse of facts and dates, more or less well classed; but always cited with a dryness which robs truth of its value, for without heart, a man cannot be truthful, he can only be exact; this continual look-out of that advance-guard of conversation, vanity, reconnoitring each thought of others, expressed or not expressed, in order to extract from it advantage; this forgetfulness of others, carried to the point of unknowingly insulting them through not perceiving that the high opinion a person entertains of himself is lowering to the rest; this total absence of sensibility, which only serves to increase susceptibility, evinced by bitter hostility elevated into a patriotic duty, by a constant liability to be offended at some preference of which another may be the object, or at some correction, however useful the lesson given; — in short, all this infatuation, serving as the buckler of folly against truth, with many other traits, which some of my readers will supply better than I can, appears to me to characterise the present race of young Frenchmen, from ten years old and upwards, for that is the age at which they become men in these days.

Such characters injure our position among foreigners; they have little influence in Paris, where the number of models of this species of impertinence is so great as to attract no attention, where they are lost in a crowd like themselves, just as instruments drown each other in an orchestre: but when they become isolated, and placed in the midst of a society where reign passions and habits of mind different from those which agitate the French world, they

exhibit themselves in a manner that would drive to despair a traveller as attached to his country as I am. Imagine, then, my joy on finding here, at the governor's dinner-table, M. ——, one among living men the most capable of giving a favourable idea of young France to foreigners. In truth, he belongs to old France by his family; and it is to the mixture of new ideas with ancient traditions that he owes the elegance of manners and the justness of views which distinguish him. He has seen well, and describes well what he has seen; he does not *think* more of himself than others think, and perhaps even a little less; and he therefore greatly edified and amused me, after leaving the table, by the recital of all that he has daily learnt since his stay in Russia. Dupe of a coquette in Petersburg, he consoles himself for his mistake by studying the land with redoubled attention. His mind is clear, he observes carefully, and recounts with exactness; which does not prevent him from listening to others, nor even — and this recalls the memory of the flourishing days of French society — from inspiring them with the wish to talk. In conversing with him we fall into an illusion; we believe that conversation is always an interchange of ideas, that refined society is still founded among us upon the relations of reciprocal pleasures; in short, we forget the invasion that brutal, unmasked egotism has made on our modern saloons, and fancy that social life is, as formerly, a commerce beneficial to all, — an old-fashioned error, which dissipates on the first reflection, and leaves us conscious of the melancholy reality, the pillage of ideas, and of *bons mots*, the literary treasons, the laws, in short, of war,

which, since the peace, have become the only recognised code in the fashionable world. Such is the dreary recollection which I cannot banish in listening to the agreeable conversation of M. ——, and in comparing it with that of his contemporaries. Of conversation may be said, with even greater justice than of the style of books, that it is the individual himself. People arrange their writings, but not their repartees, or if they attempt to arrange them, they, at least, lose more than they gain by it; for, in familiar talk, affectation is no longer a veil, it becomes a signal.

The party that met yesterday at the dinner of the governor was a singular compound of contrary elements: besides young M. ——, of whom I have just drawn the portrait, there was another Frenchman, a Doctor R——, who had sailed, I was told, in a government vessel on an expedition to the Pole, disembarked, I know not why, in Lapland, and had travelled straight from Archangel to Nijni, without even passing through Petersburg; a useless and fatiguing journey, which a man of the iron frame that I observed in this traveller could alone support. I am assured that he is a learned naturalist: his countenance is remarkable; there is something of immobility and mystery about it which piques the imagination. As for his conversation, I shall hope to hear it in France; in Russia he says nothing. The Russians are more skilful; they always say something, though, indeed, the contrary often to what is expected from them; but it is sufficient to prevent their silence being remarked. There was also, at this dinner, a family of young English fashionables, of the highest rank, and

whom I have been following, as though by track, ever since my arrival in Russia; encountering them every where, finding it impossible to avoid them, and yet never meeting an opportunity of making direct acquaintance with them. All these people found a seat at the table of the governor, without reckoning some employés, and various other natives, who never opened their mouths except to eat. I need not add that general conversation was impossible in such a circle. In Russian society, the women never become natural except by aid of culture: their language is acquired, it is that of books; and to lose the pedantry which books instil, a long experience of the world is necessary. The wife of the governor has remained too provincial, too much herself, too Russian, too natural, in short, to appear simple like the women of the court; besides, she has little facility in speaking French. Yesterday, in her drawing-room, all her attempts were limited to receiving her guests, with intentions of politeness the most praiseworthy, but she did nothing to put them at their ease, or to establish between them a facile intercourse. I was, therefore, very well satisfied, on rising from table, to be able to talk *tête-à-tête*, in a corner with M. ——. Our conversation was drawing to a close, for all the guests of the governor were preparing to leave, when young Lord ——, who knows my countryman, approached him, with a ceremonious air, and asked him to present us to each other. This flattering advance was made by him with the politeness of his country, which, without being graceful, or even because it is not graceful, is by no means devoid of a kind of

nobleness allied to the reserve of sentiments and to coldness of manners.

"I have for a long time, my lord," I said, "desired an opportunity of becoming acquainted with you, and I thank you for having given it me. We are, I think, destined frequently to meet this year; I hope for the future to profit better by the chance than I have done hitherto."

"I am very sorry to leave you," replied the Englishman, "but I set out directly."

"We shall meet again at Moscow?"

"No; I am going to Poland; my carriage is at the door, and I shall not leave it until I reach Wilna."

An inclination to laugh almost over-mastered me, when I saw in the face of M. —— that he thought with me, that after having done without each other for three months, at the court, at Peterhoff, at Moscow, in short, every where where we met without speaking, the young lord might have dispensed with uselessly imposing upon three persons the tiresomeness of a formal introduction, without any object either for himself or me. It appeared to us that, after having dined together, if his wish had been to talk with us for a quarter of an hour, nothing need have prevented his joining in our conversation. The scrupulous and formal Englishman left us stupified by his tardy, troublesome, and superfluous politeness; while he himself appeared equally satisfied with having made acquaintance with me, and with having made no use of this *advantage*, if advantage it be.

This *gaucherie* reminds me of another, of which a Polish lady was the object.

It occurred in London. The lady, who possesses a

charming wit, related it to me herself. The graces of her conversation and the solid culture of her mind cause her to be much courted in the higher circles, notwithstanding the misfortunes of her country and her family. I say notwithstanding, for whatever may be said or thought, misfortune is little compassionated in society, even in the best; on the contrary, it stands greatly in the way of the individual's other recommendations. It does not, however, prevent the woman of whom I speak from being considered as one of the most distinguished and amiable of the day, both in London and Paris. Invited to a large, ceremonious dinner party, and being placed between the master of the house and a stranger, she soon grew weary, and had long to continue so; for, although the fashion of everlasting dinners is on the wane in England, they are still longer there than in other lands. The lady, making the best of her misfortune, sought to vary the conversation, and, whenever the master of the house allowed her a moment's respite, she turned towards her right-hand neighbour; but she invariably encountered a face of stone: and notwithstanding her easy manners as a woman of rank, and her vivacity as a woman of wit, so great an immobility disconcerted her. The dinner passed under these discouraging circumstances; a gloomy silence followed: gloom is as necessary to English faces as uniform is to soldiers. Later in the evening, when the men again joined the ladies in the drawing-room, she who told me this story no sooner perceived her neighbour, the stony-visaged man of the dinner-table, than he, before venturing a word, hastened to find the owner of the house at the other end of the room, to

request him, with a solemn air, to introduce him to the fair and amiable foreigner. All these requisite ceremonies being duly accomplished, the awkward neighbour at length opened his mouth, and, drawing his breath from the lowest depths of his breast, while at the same time he bowed respectfully, said, "I have been *particularly anxious*, madame, to make your acquaintance."

The mention of this great *anxiety* produced in the lady an inclination to smile, which, however, her familiarity with the world enabled her to overcome; and she at length found in this ceremonious person a well-informed and even interesting man — of so little signification are forms in a country where pride renders the greater number of the men timid and reserved.

This proves that easy manners, light, agreeable conversation, in short, true elegance, which consists in putting every body we meet as much at his ease as we are ourselves, far from being an unimportant, frivolous thing, as certain people who only judge the world by hearsay call it, is useful and even necessary in the higher ranks of society, where either business or pleasure is constantly bringing together people who have never seen each other before. If it was always necessary, in order to make acquaintance with new faces, to proceed with the slowness and patience required in the cases of the Polish lady and myself before we could have the right of exchanging a word with an Englishman, we should renounce the object, and lose many valuable opportunities of instructing and amusing ourselves.

This morning early, the governor, whose obliging

kindness I can never tire, took me to see the curiosities of the old city. His servants attended him, which enabled me to dispense with putting to a second proof the docility of my feldjäger, whose claims the governor respects.

There is in Russia a class of persons which corresponds to the citizen class among us, though without possessing the firmness of character derived from an independent position, and the experience obtained by means of liberty of thought and cultivation of mind: this is the class of subaltern employés, or secondary nobility. The ideas of these men are generally turned towards innovations, whilst their acts are the most despotic that are committed under despotism: this, indeed, is the class which, in spite of the emperor, governs the empire. They pretend to enlighten the people, and their pretensions incur the dislike and contempt of both great and little. Their impertinences are become proverbial: whoever has any need of making use of these demi-nobles, newly raised by their office and their rank in the tchinn to the honours of territorial proprietors, revenges himself upon their pride by unmerciful ridicule. These men, risen from class to class, and attaining at length, by virtue of some cross or some employ, the class in which a man may possess lands and fellow-men, exercise their seignorial rights with a rigour which renders them objects of execration among their unhappy peasants. What a singular social phenomenon is this liberal or changeable element in a despotic system of government, which system it here renders yet more intolerable! "If we had only the old lords," the peasants say, "we should not complain of our

condition." These new men, so hated by the small number who are their serfs, are also masters of the supreme master; and are the preparers likewise of a revolution in Russia,—first, by the direct influence of their ideas, and, secondly, by the indirect consequences of the hatred and contempt which they excite among the people. Republican tyranny under autocratical! — what a combination of evils!

These are enemies created by the emperors themselves, in their distrust of the old nobility. An avowed aristocracy, long rooted in the land, but moderated by the progress of manners and the amelioration of customs, would have been an instrument of civilisation preferable to the hypocritical obedience, the destructive influence of a host of commissioners and deputies, the greater number of foreign origin, and all more or less imbued, in the secret of their hearts, with revolutionary notions; all as insolent in their thoughts as obsequious in their words and manners.

My courier, unwilling to perform his business because he is near attaining the prerogatives of this order of nobility, is the profoundly comic type of its nature and character. I wish I could describe his slim figure, his carefully-adjusted dress, his sharp, thin, dry, pitiless, yet humble countenance — humble whilst waiting till it may have the right to become arrogant; — in short, this type of a puppy, in a country where conceit is not harmless as with us; for in Russia it is a sure means of rising, if only it unite itself with servility: — but this person eludes the definition of words, as an adder glides out of sight. He represents to my eyes the union of two political

forces, the most opposite in appearance although possessing much real affinity, and although detestable when combined — despotism and revolution! I cannot observe his eyes of clouded blue, bordered with nearly white lashes, his complexion, which would be delicate, but for the bronzing rays of the sun and the frequent influence of an internal and always repressed rage, his pale and thin lips, his dry yet civil words, the intonation of which utters the very opposite of the phraseology, without viewing him as a protecting spy, a spy respected even by the governor of Nijni; and under the influence of this idea I am tempted to order post-horses, and never to stop until beyond the frontiers of Russia.

The powerful governor of Nijni does not dare to command this ambitious courier to mount the box of my carriage; and, though the representative of supreme authority, can only advise me to be patient.

Minine, the liberator of Russia—that heroic peasant whose memory has become especially popular since the French invasion—is buried at Nijni. His tomb may be seen in the cathedral, among those of the great dukes.

It was in this city that the cry of deliverance first resounded, at the time when the empire was occupied by the Poles.

Minine, a simple serf, sought the presence of Pojarski, a Russian noble: the language of the peasant breathed enthusiasm and hope. Pojarski, electrified by the sacred though rude eloquence, gathered together a few men. The daring deeds of these heroes attracted others to their standard: they marched upon Moscow, and liberated Russia.

Since the retreat of the Poles, the flag of Pojarski and Minine has always been an object of great veneration among the Russians: the peasants inhabiting a village between Yaroslaf and Nijni preserved it as a national relic. But during the war of 1812 a necessity was felt of exciting the soldiers to enthusiasm; historical associations were revived, especially those connected with Minine; and the keepers of his banner were requested to lend this palladium to the new liberators of their country, that it might be carried at the head of the army. The ancient guardians of the national treasure only consented to part with it through a feeling of devotion to the country, and upon receiving a solemn oath that it should be returned to them after victory, when its new triumphs would render it yet more illustrious. It was thus that the flag of Minine followed our army in its retreat: but, when afterwards carried back to Moscow instead of being returned to its legitimate possessors, it was detained and deposited in the treasury of the Kremlin in contempt of the most solemn promises; while, to satisfy the just appeals of the despoiled peasants, *a copy* of their miraculous ensign was sent to them — a copy which, in the derisive condescension of the robbers, was made exactly similar to the original.

Such are the lessons in good faith which the Russian government gives its people. Nor in this country is historical truth any better respected than the sanctity of oaths: the authenticity of stones is as difficult to establish as that of words or of writings. Under each new reign the edifices are remodelled at the will of the sovereign: none remain where placed by their

founders: the very tombs are not shielded from the tempest of imperial caprice: even the dead are exposed to the fantasies of him who rules the living. The Emperor Nicholas, who is now playing the architect in Moscow, and reconstructing the Kremlin, is not at his first attempt of the kind. Nijni has already seen him at work.

This morning, on entering the cathedral, I felt impressed by the ancient appearance of the edifice which contains the tomb of Minine: it, at least, has been respected for more than two hundred years, I thought to myself; and this conclusion caused me to find the aspect of the place the more august.

The governor led me to the sepulchre of the hero; it lies among the monuments of the ancient sovereigns of Nijni: and when the Emperor Nicholas visited it, he descended patriotically into the cave even where the body is deposited.

"This is one of the most beautiful and interesting of the churches that I have seen in your country," I observed to the governor.

"It was I who built it," replied M. Boutourline.

"How? .... You mean, doubtless, to say that you restored it?"

"No; the ancient church was falling into ruins: the Emperor preferred its being reconstructed rather than repaired: it is only two years ago that it stood *fifty paces further on*, and formed a projection that interfered with the regularity of our Kremlin's interior."

"But the corpse and bones of Minine?" I exclaimed.

"They were disinterred with those of the grand

dukes: all are now placed in the new sepulchre, of which you see the stone."

I could not have replied without causing an unpleasant commotion in the mind of a provincial governor as attached to the duties of his office as is the governor of Nijni: I therefore followed him, in silence, to the little obelisk of the square, and towards the immense ramparts of the Kremlin of Nijni.

We here see what is understood by veneration for the dead, and respect for historical monuments in Russia. The emperor, who knows that ancient things are venerable, desires that a church, built yesterday, should be honoured as old; and to produce this, he says that it is old, whereupon it becomes so. The new church of Minine is the ancient one: if you doubt this truth, you are seditious.

Every where is to be seen the same system — that of Peter the Great — perpetuated by his successors. That man believed and proved that the will of a Muscovite czar might serve as a substitute for the laws of nature, for the rules of art, for truth, history, and humanity, for the ties of blood, and of religion. If the Russians still venerate him it is because their vanity outweighs their judgment. "Behold," they say, "what Russia was before the accession of that great prince, and what she has become after: see what a monarch of genius can do!" This is a false mode of appreciating the glory of a nation. I see, among the most civilised states in the world, some whose power extends to none except their own subjects; and these, even, are few in number. Such states have no influence in universal politics. It is not by the pride of conquest, nor by political tyranny

exercised over foreign interests, that their governments acquire a right to universal gratitude; it is by good examples, by wise laws, by an enlightened and beneficent administration. With such advantages a small nation may become—not conquerors, not oppressors, but LIGHTS of the world; and this is a hundred times preferable.

I cannot sufficiently grieve to see how far these ideas, so simple but so undoubtedly correct, are from influencing the best and most gifted minds, not only in Russia, but in every land, and above all, in France. Among us, the fascinations of war and conquest still survive, in spite of the lessons taught by the God of heaven, and by interest, that god of earth. Nevertheless, I still have hope, because, notwithstanding the deviations of our philosophers, notwithstanding the egotism of our language, notwithstanding our habit of calumniating ourselves, we are an essentially religious nation. Assuredly, this is no paradox; we devote ourselves to ideas with more generosity than any other people in the world: and are not ideas the idols of Christian communities?

Unfortunately we lack discernment and independence in our choice: we do not distinguish between the idol of the day, which will be an object of contempt on the morrow, and the object which merits all our sacrifices. I hope yet to live long enough to see that bloody idol of war, brute force, shattered among us. A country is always powerful and extensive enough when its people limit their courage to a willingness to live and die for the truth, to shed their blood in a war with falsehood and injustice, and when they justly enjoy the renown of so lofty a devotion.

Athens was but a speck upon earth, yet it became the sun of ancient civilisation; and while it shone in all its brightness, how many nations, powerful by their numbers and extensive territory, lived, fought, conquered, exhausted themselves, and died, uselessly and obscurely! What would have become of Germany under the system of a conquering policy? And yet, notwithstanding its divisions, notwithstanding the weakness, as regards physical resources, of the little states that compose it, Germany, with its poets, its thinkers, its learned men, its differing forms of government, its republics, and its princes, not rivals in power, but in mental culture, in moral elevation, in sagacity of thought, is, at least, on a level, in general civilisation, with the most advanced countries in the world.

It is not by covetously looking beyond themselves that a people acquire a right to the gratitude of mankind, but by turning their strength upon themselves in order to become all that they are capable of being, in the double relations of mental and physical regeneration. This species of merit is as superior to the propagandism of the sword as virtue is to glory.

A power of the first rank: that stale expression, applied to politics, will long continue to cause the misery of the world. Self-love is the most common principle in man: and for this very reason the God who founded his doctrine on humility is the only true God, considered even in the light of a sound policy; for he alone has foreseen the path of indefinite progress, of a progress altogether intellectual, or internal: and yet, for eighteen hundred years the world has doubted his words; but, doubted and discussed as they are,

they constitute its life: what would they do then for this ungrateful world if they were universally received with faith? The morals of the gospel applied to the policy of nations — this is the problem for the future! Europe, with its ancient, thoroughly civilised people, is the sanctuary whence religious light will spread over the universe.

The thick walls of the Nijni Kremlin wind around a hill much loftier and steeper than the hill of Moscow. The ramparts, rising in steps above each other, the terraces, arches, and battlements of this fortress, produce a striking effect: but, notwithstanding the beauty of the site, he would be deceived who should expect, in beholding it, to be seized with the astonishment produced by the Kremlin of Moscow — that religious fortress in which history is written on rock. The Kremlin of Moscow is an object that has not its like, either in Russia or in the world.

I may here insert a fact which I neglected to mention at the time of noticing the ancient palace of the Czars in that fortress; a palace which, as the reader may recollect, produces, with its retreating stories, its ornaments in relief, and its Asiatic paintings, the effect of an Indian pyramid. The furniture of this palace was old and decayed: skilful workmen were sent to Moscow, who made *exactly similar copies* of each article; so that *the same* movables, although renewed from top to bottom, constitute the ornament of the restored palace. The authentic remains of the ancient furniture were sold by auction, in Moscow itself, and before the eyes of all the world; and yet not one person in this country, where respect for sovereignty is a religion, was found willing to

save the royal relics from the fate of the most vulgar furniture. What is here called keeping up old things is the baptizing of new ones with ancient names.

We also visited a very pretty convent: the nuns are poor, but their house exhibits edifying marks of cleanliness. Afterwards, the governor took me to see his camp: the rage for manœuvres, reviews, and bivouacs is universal. The governors of the provinces, like the emperor, pass their life in playing at soldiers; and the more numerous these assemblages are, the more proudly do the governors feel their resemblance to their master. The regiments which form the camp of Nijni are composed of the children of soldiers. It was evening when we reached their tents, reared on a plain which is a continuation of the table of the hill on which stands old Nijni.

Six hundred men were chanting the prayers; and at a distance, in the open air, this religious and military choir produced an astonishing effect; it was like a cloud of perfume rising majestically under a pure and deep sky: prayer ascending from that abyss of passions and sorrows — the heart of man — may be compared to the column of smoke and fire which rises through the torn crater of the volcano, until it reaches the firmament. And who knows if the pillar of the Israelites, so long lost in the desert, did not image the same thing? The voices of these poor Slavonian soldiers, softened by the distance, seemed to come from on high. When the first notes struck our ears, a knoll on the plain hid the tents from our eyes. The weakened echoes of earth responded to these celestial voices; and the music was interrupted by distant discharges of musquetry — a warlike orchestre, which

scarcely seemed more loud than the great drums of the Opera, and which appeared much more in place than they do. When the tents, whence issued the harmonious notes, appeared before us, the setting sun, glistening upon their canvas, added the magic of colour to that of sounds.

The governor, who saw the pleasure that I experienced in listening to this music, allowed me to enjoy it, and enjoyed it himself, for a considerable time: nothing gives greater pleasure to this truly hospitable man than to procure enjoyment for his guests. The best way of showing him your gratitude is to let him see your gratification. We finished our ride by twilight; and, returning through the low town, we stopped before a church which has not ceased to attract my eyes since I have been in Nijni. It is a true model of Russian architecture; neither ancient Greek, nor the Greek of the Lower Empire, but a Delft-ware toy, in the style of the Kremlin, or of the church of Vassili Blagennoï, though with less variety in the form and colour. It is so covered with flower-work and carvings of curious form, that one cannot stop before it without thinking of a vessel of Dresden china. This little chef-d'œuvre of the whimsical is not ancient. It was raised by the munificence of the Strogonoff family; great nobles descended from the merchants, at whose cost was made the conquest of Siberia under Ivan IV. The brothers Strogonoff of that period, themselves raised the adventurous army which conquered a kingdom for Russia. Their soldiers were the buccaneers of *terra firma*.

The interior of the church of the Strogonoffs does not answer to its exterior; but, such as it is, I greatly

prefer it to the clumsy copies of Roman temples with which Petersburg and Moscow are encumbered.

To finish the day, we attended the opera of the fair, and listened to a vaudeville in the native language. The Russian vaudevilles are still translations from the French. The people of the country appear to be very proud of this new means of civilisation which they have imported. I was unable to judge of the influence of the spectacle upon the minds of the assembly, owing to the fact of the theatre being empty almost to the letter. Besides the ennui and the compassion one feels in the presence of poor players, when there is no audience, I experienced on this occasion the disagreeable impression which the mixing up of singing and speaking-scenes has always communicated to me in our own theatres. This barbarism, without the salt of French wit, would, but for the governor, have driven me away during the first act. As it was, I remained patient until the conclusion of the performance.

I have been passing the night in writing to dissipate my ennui; but this effort has made me ill, and I am going to bed in a fever.

CHAP. XXXV.*

ASSASSINATION OF A GERMAN LANDHOLDER. — RUSSIAN AVERSION TO INNOVATIONS. — CONSEQUENCES OF THE ESTABLISHED STATE OF THINGS. — SERVILITY OF THE PEASANTS. — EXILE OF M. GUIBAL. — A MUSCOVITE WITCH. — A SICK MAN AMONG HIS FRIENDS IN RUSSIA. — RUSSIAN CHARITY. — A PASSION FOR TOMBS. — NOCTURNAL LESSONS IN ETIQUETTE. — GYPSIES AT THE FAIR. — THE VIRTUES OF OUTCASTS. — VICTOR HUGO. — PROJECT OF VISITING KAZAN ABANDONED. — MEDICAL ADVICE. — IDEAS OF THE RUSSIANS RESPECTING FREE GOVERNMENTS. — VLADIMIR. — THE FORESTS OF RUSSIA. — THE USE OF A FELDJÄGER. — FALSE DELICACY IMPOSED UPON FOREIGNERS. — CENTRALISATION. — RENCONTRE WITH AN ELEPHANT. — AN ACCIDENT. — RETURN TO MOSCOW. — A FAREWELL TO THE KREMLIN. — EFFECT PRODUCED BY THE VICINITY OF THE EMPEROR. — MILITARY FÊTE AT BORODINO. — THE AUTHOR'S MOTIVES FOR NOT ATTENDING. — PRINCE WITGENSTEIN. — HISTORICAL TRAVESTY.

A M. JAMENT related to me, at Nijni, that a German, the new lord of a village, a great agriculturalist and a propagator of modes of husbandry still unused in this country, has just been assassinated on his own domains, contiguous to those of a M. Merline, another foreigner, through whom the fact has come to our knowledge.

Two men presented themselves to this German lord, under the pretext of purchasing horses of him; and in the evening they entered his chamber and murdered him. It was, I am assured, a blow aimed by the peasants of the foreigner in revenge for the

* Written at Vladimir, between Nijni and Moscow, the 2d of September.

innovations which he sought to make in the culture of their lands.

The people of this country have an aversion for every thing that is not Russian. I often hear it repeated, that they will some day rise from one end of the empire to the other upon the men without a beard, and destroy them all. It is by the beard that the Russians know each other. In the eyes of the peasants, a Russian with a shaved chin is a traitor, who has sold himself to foreigners, and who deserves to share their fate. But what will be the punishment inflicted by the survivors upon the authors of these Muscovite Vespers? All Russia cannot be sent to Siberia. Villages may be transported, but it would be difficult to exile provinces. It is worthy of remark, that this kind of punishment strikes the peasants without hurting them. A Russian recognises his country wherever long winters reign: snow has always the same aspect; the winding-sheet of the earth is every where equally white, whether its thickness be six inches or six feet; so that, if they only allow him to re-construct his cabin and his sledge, the Russian finds himself at home to whatever spot he may be exiled. In the deserts of the north it costs little to make a country. To the man who has never seen any thing but icy plains scattered with stunted trees, every cold and desert land represents his native soil. Besides, the inhabitants of these latitudes are always inclined to quit the place of their birth.

Scenes of disorder are multiplying in the country: every day I hear of some new crime: but, by the time it is made public, it has already become ancient, which tends to weaken its impressiveness, especially

as from so many isolated atrocities nothing results to disturb the general repose of the country. As I have already said, tranquillity is maintained among this people by the length and difficulties of communication, and by the secrecy of the government, which perpetuates the evil under the fear of disclosing it. To these causes I may add the blind obedience of the troops, and, above all, the complete ignorance of the country people themselves. But, singular conjunction of facts! — the latter remedy is at the same time the first cause of the evil: it is, therefore, difficult to see how the nation will get out of the dangerous circle in which circumstances have placed it. Hitherto the good and the evil, the danger and the safety, have come to it from the same source.

The reader can form no conception of the manner in which a lord, when taking possession of some newly-acquired domain, is received by his peasants. They exhibit a servility which would appear incredible to the people of our country: men, women, and children, all fall on their knees before their new master — all kiss the hands, and sometimes the feet, of the landholder; and, O! miserable profanation of faith! — those who are old enough to err, voluntarily confess to him their sins — he being to them the image and the envoy of God, representing both the King of Heaven and the emperor! Such fanaticism in servitude must end in casting an illusion over the mind of him who is its object, especially if he has not long attained the rank which he possesses: the change of fortune thus marked, must so dazzle him as to persuade him that he is not of the same race as those prostrate at his feet — those whom he sud-

denly finds himself empowered to command. It is no paradox which I put forward, when I maintain that the aristocracy of birth could alone ameliorate the condition of the serfs, and enable them to profit by emancipation through gentle and gradual transitions. Their slavery becomes insupportable under the new men of wealth. Under the old ones, it is hard enough: but these are at least born above them, and also among them, which is a consolation; besides, the habit of authority is as natural to the one party as that of slavery is to the other; and habit mitigates every thing, mollifying the injustice of the strong, and lightening the yoke of the feeble. But the change of fortunes and conditions produces frightful results in a country subjected to a system of servitude: and yet it is this very change which maintains the duration of the present order of things in Russia, because it conciliates the men who know how to benefit by it—a second example of the remedy being drawn from the source of the evil. Terrible circle, round which revolve all the populations of a vast empire! This lord, this new deity — what title has he to be adored? He is adored because he has had enough money and capacity for intrigue to be able to buy the land to which are attached all the men prostrate before him. An upstart appears to me a monster, in a country where the life of the poor depends upon the rich, and where man is the fortune of man; the onward progress of industrious enterprise, and the immovableness of villenage combined in the same society, produce results that are revolting: but the despot loves the upstart — he is his creature! The position of a new lord is this: yesterday his slave

was his equal: his industry more or less honest, his flatteries more or less mean, have put it into his power to purchase a certain number of his comrades. To become the beast of burden of an equal is an intolerable evil. It is, however, a result which an impious alliance of arbitrary customs, and liberal, or, to speak more justly, unstable institutions, can bring upon a people. No where else does the man who makes a fortune have his feet kissed by his vanquished rivals. Anomalies the most shocking have become the basis of the Russian constitution.

I may allude, *en passant*, to a singular confusion of ideas produced in the minds of the people by the system to which they are subjected. Under this system, the individual is intimately connected with the soil, being, indeed, sold with it; but instead of recognising himself as a fixture, and the soil as transferable — in other words, instead of perceiving that he belongs to this soil, by means of which men dispose of him despotically, he fancies that the soil is his own. In truth, his error of perception is reduced to a mere optical illusion; for possessor as he imagines himself of the land, yet he does not understand how it can be sold without the sale also of those who inhabit it. Thus, when he changes masters, he does not say that the soil has been sold to a new proprietor; he considers that it is his own person that has been first sold, and that, over and above the bargain, his land has gone with him — that land which saw him born, and which has supplied him with the means of life. How could liberty be given to men whose acquaintance with social laws is about on a level with that of the trees and plants?

M. Guibal — every time that I am authorised to cite a name, I use the permission — M. Guibal, the son of a schoolmaster, was exiled without cause, or at least without explanation, and without being able to guess his crime, into a Siberian village in the environs of Orenburg. A song, which he composed to beguile his sorrow, was listened to by an inspector, who put it before the eyes of the governor; it attracted the attention of that august personage, who sent his aide-de-camp to the exile to inform himself regarding the circumstances of his situation and his conduct, and to judge if he was good for any thing. The unfortunate man succeeded in interesting the aide-de-camp, who, on his return, made a very favourable report, in consequence of which he was immediately recalled. He has never known the real cause of his misfortune: perhaps it was another song.

Such are the circumstances on which depends the fate of a man in Russia!

The following story is of a different character.

In the domains of Prince ——, beyond Nijni, a female peasant obtained the character of being a witch, and her reputation spread far and wide. Prodigies were said to be performed by this woman: but her husband grumbled; the household was neglected, and the work abandoned. The steward confirmed in his report all that was said of the sorceress. The prince visited his domains. The first subject about which he made inquiry was the affair of the famous demoniac. The pope told him that the state of the woman grew worse daily, that she no longer spoke, and that he was determined to exorcise her. The ceremony took place in the presence of the lord, but

without any effect; he, being determined to get to the bottom of so singular an affair, had recourse to the Russian remedy *par excellence*, and sentenced the possessed woman to be flogged. This treatment did not fail to produce its effect.

At the twenty-fifth stroke the sufferer asked for mercy, and swore to tell the truth; which truth was, that she had married a man whom she did not love; and that to avoid working for his benefit she had pretended to be possessed. The enactment of this comedy suited her indolence, and at the same time restored the health of a multitude of sick people, who repaired to her full of faith and hope, and returned cured.

Sorcerers are not scarce among the Russian peasants, with whom they supply the place of physicians: these rogues perform numerous and complete cures, as is corroborated even by the scientific practitioners! What a triumph for Molière! and what a vortex of doubt for all the world! . . . Imagination! . . . who can tell if imagination is not a lever in the hands of God to raise creatures of limited powers above themselves? For my own part, I carry doubt to a point that brings me back to faith; for I believe, against my reason, that the sorcerer can cure even unbelievers, by means of a power whose existence I cannot deny, and yet know not how to define. By recourse to the word imagination, our learned men dispense with explaining the phenomena which they can neither refute nor comprehend. Imagination is to certain metaphysicians what the nerves are to certain medical men.

An anecdote here occurs to me which will show

whether I am wrong in thinking that there are men who become dupes of the worship which the serf renders to the lord. Flattery has so much power over the human heart that, in the long run, the most clumsy of all flatterers, fear and interest, find a way of attaining their end: it is thus that many Russians suppose themselves to possess a different nature from the common orders.

A Russian, immensely rich, but who ought to have been enlightened as regards the miseries and infirmities of wealth and power—for the fortune of his family had been established for two generations—was travelling in Germany. He fell sick in a small town, and called in the first physician of the place: at first he submitted to every thing that was ordered; but not finding himself at the end of a few days any better, he grew weary of obedience, rose up angrily, and throwing off the veil of civilisation in which he had deemed it advisable to muffle himself, he called the landlord, and, while rapidly marching up and down his chamber, thus addressed him: "I do not understand the manner in which I am treated: here I have been dosed for three days without being in the least benefited: what kind of a doctor have you sent me? *he cannot know who I am!*"

As I have commenced my chapter with anecdotes, here is another, less piquant, but which will give an idea of the character and habits of the people in high life in Russia. It is only the fortunate who are liked here; and this exclusive preference sometimes produces very inconsistent scenes.

A young Frenchman had perfectly succeeded in gaining the good graces of a social circle met together

in the country. There was quite a contest who should do him most honour: dinners, balls, excursions, hunting matches—nothing was wanting, and the stranger was enchanted: he boasted to all comers of the hospitality and elegance of these calumniated *barbarians of the North!*

A short time after, the young enthusiast fell ill in the neighbouring town. So long as the malady continued, and grew worse, his most intimate friends were invisible and silent as the grave. Two months thus passed; scarcely did any one during that time send to make an inquiry after him: at length youth triumphed, and, notwithstanding the doctor of the place, the traveller became convalescent. As soon as he was perfectly restored, every body resorted to him to celebrate his recovery, as though they had been thinking only of him during the whole time of his illness: to have seen the delight of his former hosts, you would have said it was they who had been raised again to life. He was loaded with protestations of friendship; he was overwhelmed with new projects of diversion; he was caressed with feline tenderness: capriciousness, egotism, and inconstancy are velvet paws: visitors came to play at cards by his arm-chair; they proposed to send him a sofa, sweetmeats, and wine;—now that he had no longer need of any thing, every thing was at his disposal. However, he did not allow himself to be a second time caught by this bait; he profited by the lesson, and, rich in experience, entered his carriage in all haste, impatient, he said, to fly from a country which is hospitable only to those who are fortunate, useful, or amusing!

An intellectual, elderly French woman, an *émigrée*,

resided in a provincial town. One day she went to pay a visit to a Russian lady of her acquaintance. In many of the houses in the country, the staircases are covered by trap-doors. The French lady, who had not remarked one of these deceptive openings, in proceeding to descend, fell down about fifteen wooden steps. What course did the lady of the house take? The reader would not easily guess. Without even seeking to inform herself whether her unfortunate friend was dead or alive — without running to her aid, without sending for a surgeon, or even calling for help, she ran devoutly to shut herself up in her oratory, there to pray the holy Virgin to come to the succour of the poor dead, or wounded — either one or the other, as it might please God to ordain. Meantime the wounded — not the dead — had time to rise, and, there being no limb broken, to re-ascend into the antechamber, and to cause herself to be conveyed home before her pious friend had quitted her cushion of prayer. That individual could not, indeed, be brought out of her asylum, until she had been loudly assured, through the key-hole, that the accident was without serious consequences, and that her friend had returned home. Upon this, active charity again awoke in the breast of the good Russian devotee, who, recognising the efficacy of her prayers, hastened officiously to her friend's house, insisted on entering her apartment, and having reached her bed-side, overwhelmed her with protestations of interest, which, for upwards of an hour, deprived her of the repose she so much required.

The above trait of childishness was related to me by the individual to whom the accident happened.

We need not be surprised, after this, to hear that people fall into the Neva and drown there, without any one running to their succour, or even daring to speak of their death!

Whimsical sentiments of every species abound in Russia among the higher classes, because hearts and minds are the prey of exhaustion and satiety. A lady of high rank in Petersburg has been married several times: she passes the summers in a magnificent country house, some leagues from the city, and her garden is filled with the tombs of all her husbands, whom she begins to love passionately as soon as they are dead. She raises for them mausolea and chapels, weeps over their ashes, and covers their tombs with sentimental epitaphs; in short, she renders to the dead an honour offensive to the living. The pleasure-grounds of this lady have thus become a real Père La Chaise, with very little gloom about them for whoever has not, like the noble widow, a love of tombs and deceased husbands.

Nothing need surprise us in the way of false sensitiveness among a people who study elegance with the same precise minutia that others learn the art of war or of government. The following is an example of the grave interest the Russians take in the most puerile matters whenever they affect them personally.

A descendant of ancient boyards, who was rich and elderly, lived in the country, not far from Moscow. A detachment of hussars was, with its officers, quartered in his house. It was the season of Easter, which the Russians celebrate with peculiar solemnity. All the members of a family unite with their friends

and neighbours, to attend the mass, which on this festival is offered precisely at midnight.

The proprietor of whom I speak, being the most considerable person of the neighbourhood, expected a large assembly of guests on Easter-Eve, more especially as he had, that year, restored and greatly beautified his parish-church.

Two or three days before the feast, he was awakened by a procession of horses and carriages passing over a pier that led to his residence. This castle is, according to the usual custom, situated close upon the borders of a small sheet of water; the church rises on the opposite side, just at the end of the pier, which serves as a road from the castle to the village.

Astonished to hear so unusual a noise in the middle of the night, the master of the house rose, and to his great surprise, saw from the window, by the light of numerous torches, a beautiful calèche drawn by four horses and attended by outriders.

He quickly recognised this new equipage, as well as the man to whom it belonged: he was one of the hussar officers lodged in his house, an individual who had been recently enriched by an inheritance, and had just purchased a carriage and horses, which had been brought to the castle. The old lord, upon seeing him parading in his open calèche, all alone, by night, in the midst of a deserted and silent country, imagined that he had become mad: he followed with his eyes the elegant procession, and saw it advance in good order towards the church, and stop before the door; where the owner gravely descended from the carriage, aided by his people, who crowded round to support the

young officer, although he, appearing quite as nimble as they, might have easily dispensed with their assistance.

Scarcely had he touched the ground, than, slowly and majestically, he re-entered his coach, took another turn on the pier, and came back again to the church, where he and his people recommenced the previous ceremony. This game was renewed until daybreak. At the last repetition, the officer gave orders to return to the castle without noise. A few minutes after, all were in their beds.

In the morning, the first question that the wondering owner of the house put to his guest, the captain of hussars, was, as to the meaning of his nocturnal ride, and of the evolutions of his people around his person. "O! nothing!" replied the officer, without the least embarrassment: "my servants are novices; you will have much company at Easter; people are coming here from every quarter; I therefore merely thought it best to make a rehearsal of *my entrée* into church."

I must now give an account of my departure from Nijni, which it will be seen was less brilliant than the nocturnal ride of the captain of hussars.

On the evening that I accompanied the governor to the empty Russian theatre, I met, after leaving him, an acquaintance who took me to the café of the gypsies, situated in the most lively part of the fair: it was nearly midnight, but this house was still full of people, noise, and light. The women struck me as being very handsome; their costume, although in appearance the same as that of other Russian females, takes a foreign character when worn by them: there

is magic in their glances, and their features and attitudes are graceful, and at the same time imposing. In short, they resemble the sibyls of Michael Angelo.

Their singing is about the same as that of the gypsies at Moscow, but if any thing, I thought it yet more expressive, forcible, and varied. I am assured that they have much pride of character, that they have warm passions, yet are neither light nor mercenary, and that they often repel, with disdain, very advantageous offers.

The more I see, the more I am astonished at the remains of virtue in persons who are not virtuous. Individuals whose state is the most decried, are often, like nations degraded by their governments, full of great qualities, ill-understood; whilst, on the contrary, we are disagreeably surprised to discern weakness in people of high character, and a puerile disposition in nations said to be well governed. The conditions of human virtues are nearly always impenetrable mysteries to the mind of man.

The idea of rehabilitation, which I here only vaguely point out, has been laid open and defended, with all the power of talent, by one of the boldest minds of our own or any epoch. It seems as though Victor Hugo had sought to consecrate his theatre to revealing to the world all that remains of human, that is, of divine, in the souls of those creatures of God who are the most reprobated by society: this design is more than moral, it is religious. To extend the sphere of pity is to perform a pious work: the multitude is often cruel by levity, by habit, or by principle, but yet more often by mistake. To cure, if it be possible, the wounds of hearts ill-understood,

without yet more deeply injuring other hearts also worthy of compassion, is to associate ourselves in the designs of Providence, and to enlarge the kingdom of heaven.

The night was far advanced when we left the gypsies; stormy clouds, which swept over the plain, had suddenly changed the temperature. The long, deserted streets of the fair were filled with ponds of water, through which our horses dashed without relaxing their speed; fresh squalls, bringing over black clouds, announced more rain, and drove the water, splashed aside by the horses, in our faces. "Summer is at last gone," said my cicerone. "I feel you are only too right," I answered; "I am as cold as if it were winter." I had no cloak: in the morning we had been suffocated with the heat; on returning to my room, I was freezing. I sat down to write for two hours, and then retired to rest in the icy fit of fever. In the morning, when I wished to get up, a vertigo seized me, and I fell again on my couch, unable to dress myself.

This annoyance was the more disagreeable, as I had intended leaving on that very day for Kazan: I wished at least to set my foot in Asia; and with this view had engaged a boat to descend the Volga, whilst my feldjäger had been directed to bring my carriage empty to Kazan, to convey me back to Nijni by land. However, my zeal had a little cooled after the governor of Nijni had proudly displayed to me plans and drawings of Kazan. It is still the same city from one end of Russia to another: the great square, the broad streets, bordered with diminutive houses, the house of the governor, with ornamented

pillars and a pediment; decorations even more out of place in a Tartar than in a Russian town; barracks, cathedrals in the style of temples; nothing, in short, was wanting; and I felt that the whole tiresome architectural repetition was not worth the trouble of prolonging my journey two hundred leagues in order to visit. But the frontiers of Siberia and the recollections of the siege still tempted me. It became necessary, however, to renounce the journey, and to keep quiet for four days.

The governor very politely came to see me in my humble bed. At last, on the fourth day, feeling my indisposition increase, I determined to call in a doctor. This individual said to me,—

"You have no fever, you are not yet ill, but you will be seriously so if you remain three days longer at Nijni. I know the influence of this air upon certain temperaments; leave it; you will not have travelled ten leagues without finding yourself better, and the day after you will be well again."

"But I can neither eat, sleep, nor walk, nor even move without severe pains in my head: what will become of me if I am obliged to stop on the road?"

"Cause yourself to be carried into your coach: the autumn rains have commenced: I repeat, that I cannot answer for you if you remain at Nijni."

This doctor is scientific and experienced: he has passed several years at Paris, after having previously studied in Germany. His look inspired me with confidence; and the day after I received his advice I entered my carriage, in the midst of a beating rain and an icy wind. It was unpleasant enough to discourage the strongest traveller: nevertheless, at the

second stage, the prediction of the doctor was fulfilled; I began to breathe more freely, though fatigue so overpowered me that I was obliged to stop and pass the night in a miserable lodging: the next day I was again in health.

During the time spent in my bed at Nijni, my guardian spy grew tired of our prolonged stay at the fair, and of his consequent inaction. One morning he came to my valet-de-chambre, and said to him, in German, "When do we leave?"

"I cannot tell; Monsieur is ill."

"Is he ill?"

"Do you suppose that it is to please himself that he keeps his bed in such a room as you found for him here?"

"What is the matter with him?"

"I do not know at all."

"Why is he ill?"

"Good heavens! you had better go and ask him."

This *why* appears to me worthy of being noted.

The man has never forgiven me the scene in the coach. Since that day his manners and his countenance have changed, which proves to me that there always remains some corner for the natural disposition, and for sincerity in even the most profoundly-dissimulating characters. I therefore think all the better of him for his rancour: I had believed him incapable of any primitive sentiment.

The Russians, like all new comers in the civilised world, are excessively susceptible: they cannot understand generalities; they take every thing for personalities: nowhere is France so ill understood. The liberty of thinking and speaking is more incom-

prehensible than any thing else to these people. Those who pretend to judge our country, say to me, that they do not really believe our king abstains from punishing the writers who daily abuse him in Paris.

"Nevertheless," I answer them, "the fact is there to convince you."

"Yes, yes, you talk of toleration," they reply, with a knowing air; "it is all very well for the multitude and for foreigners: but your government punishes secretly the too audacious journalists."

When I repeat that every thing is public in France, they laugh sneeringly, politely check themselves; but they do not believe me.

The city of Vladimir is often mentioned in history: its aspect is like all the other Russian cities — that eternal type with which the reader is only too familiar. The country, also, that I have travelled over from Nijni resembles the rest of Russia — a forest without trees, interrupted by towns without life — barracks, raised sometimes upon heaths, sometimes upon marshes, and the spirit of a regiment to animate them. When I tell the Russians that their woods are badly managed, and that their country will in time be without fuel, they laugh me in the face. It has been calculated how many thousands of years it will require to consume the wood which covers the soil of an immense portion of the empire; and this calculation satisfies every body. It is *written* in the estimates sent in by each provincial governor, that each province contains so many acres of forests. Upon these data the statistical department goes to work; but before performing their purely arithmetical

labour of adding sums to make a total, the calculators do not think of visiting those forests upon paper. If they did, they would in most cases find only a few thickets of brushwood, amid plains of fern and rushes. But with their written satisfactory reports, the Russians trouble themselves very little about the want of the only riches proper to their soil. Their woods are immense in the bureau of the minister, and this is sufficient for them. The day may be foreseen when, as a consequence of this administrative supineness and security, the people will warm themselves by the fires made of the old dusty papers accumulated in the public offices: these riches increase daily.

My words may appear bold and even revolting; for the sensitive self-love of the Russians imposes upon foreigners duties of delicacy and propriety to which I do not submit. My sincerity will render me culpable in the eyes of the men of this country. What ingratitude! the minister gives me a feldjäger; the presence of his uniform spares me all the difficulties of the journey; and therefore am I bound, in the opinion of the Russians, to approve of every thing with them. That foreigner, they think, would outrage all the laws of hospitality if he permitted himself to criticise a country where so much regard has been shown towards him. Notwithstanding all this, I hold myself free to describe what I see, and to pass my opinion upon it.

To appreciate, as I ought to do, the favour accorded me by the director-general of the posts, in furnishing me with a courier, it will at least be right to state the discomforts which his obliging civility has spared me. Had I set out for Nijni with a common servant

only, we should, however well he might have spoken Russian, have been delayed by the tricks and frauds of the postmasters at nearly every stage. They would at first have refused us horses, and then have showed us empty stables, to convince us there were none. After an hour's parley they would have found us a set that they would pretend belonged to some peasant, who would condescend to spare them for twice or thrice the charge established by the imperial post-regulations. We might at first have refused; the horses would have been taken away; till at last, tired of the war, we should have concluded by humbly imploring the return of the animals, and by complying with every demand. The same scene would have been renewed at each out-of-the-way post. This is the manner in which inexperienced and unprotected foreigners here travel.

The Russians are always on their guard against truth, which they dread: but I, who belong to a community where every thing is transacted openly, why should I embarrass myself with the scruples of these men, who say nothing, or merely darkly whisper unmeaning phrases, and beg their neighbours to keep them a secret. Every open and clearly-defined statement causes a stir in a country where not only the expression of opinions, but also the recital of the most undoubted facts, is forbidden. A Frenchman cannot imitate this absurdity; but he ought to note it.

Russia is governed; God knows when she will be civilised.

Putting no faith in persuasion, the monarch draws every thing to himself, under pretext that a rigor-

ous system of centralisation is indispensable to the government of an empire so prodigiously extended as is Russia. This system is perhaps necessary to the principle of blind obedience: but enlightened obedience is opposed to the false idea of simplification, which has for more than a century influenced the successors of the Czar Peter, and their subjects also. Simplification, carried to this excess, is not power, it is death. Absolute authority ceases to be real; it becomes a phantom, when it has only the images of men to exercise itself upon.

Russia will never really become a nation until the day when its prince shall voluntarily repair the evil committed by Peter I. But will there ever be found, in such a country, a sovereign courageous enough to admit that he is only a man?

It is necessary to see Russia, to appreciate all the difficulty of this political reformation, and to understand the energy of character that is necessary to work it.

I am now writing at a post-house between Vladimir and Moscow.

Among all the chances and accidents by which a traveller is in danger of losing his life on a Russian high road, the imagination of the reader would be at fault to single out the one by which my life has been just menaced. The danger was so great, that without the address, the strength, and the presence of mind of my Italian servant, I should not be the writer of the following account.

It was necessary that the Schah of Persia should

have an object in conciliating the friendship of the Emperor of Russia, and that with this view, building his expectations upon bulky presents, he should send to the Czar one of the most enormous black elephants of Asia; it was also needful that this walking tower should be clothed with superb hangings, serving as a caparison for the colossus, and that he should be escorted by a cortège of horsemen, resembling a cloud of grasshoppers; that the whole should be followed by a file of camels, who appeared no larger than donkeys by the side of this elephant, the most enormous that I have ever beheld; it was yet further necessary, that at the summit of the living monument, should be seen a man with olive complexion and oriental costume, carrying a parasol, and sitting crosslegged upon the back of the monster; and finally, it was necessary, that whilst this potentate of the desert was thus forced to journey on foot towards Petersburg, where the climate will soon transfer him to the collection of the mammoths and the mastodons, I should be travelling post by the same route; and that my departure from Vladimir should so coincide with that of the Persians, that, at a certain point of the deserted road, the gallop of my Russian horses should bring me behind them, and make it necessary to pass by the side of the giant; — it required nothing less, I say, than all these combined circumstances to explain the danger caused by the terror that seized my four horses, on seeing before them an animated pyramid, moving as if by magic in the midst of a crowd of strange-looking men and beasts.

Their astonishment as they approached the colossus

was at first shown by a general start aside, by extraordinary neighings and snortings, and by refusing to proceed. But the words and the whip of the coachman at length so far mastered them as to compel them to pass the fantastic object of their terror. They submitted trembling, their manes stood erect, and scarcely were they alongside of the monster than, reproaching themselves as it were for a courage, which was nothing more than fear of another object, they yielded to their panic, and the voice and reins of the driver became useless. The man was conquered at the moment when he thought himself the conqueror: scarcely had the horses felt that the elephant was behind them, than they dashed off at full speed, heedless as to where their blind frenzy might carry them. This furious course had very nearly cost us our lives: the coachman, bewildered and powerless, remained immovable on his seat, and slackened the reins; the feldjäger, placed beside him, partook of his stupefaction and helplessness. Antonio and I, seated within the calèche, which was closed on account of the weather and my ailment, remained pale and mute: our species of tarandasse has no doors; it is a boat, over the sides of which we have to step to get in or out. On a sudden, the maddened horses swerved from the road, and dashed at an almost perpendicular bank, about ten feet high: one of the small fore-wheels was already buried in the bank-side; two of the horses had reached the top without breaking their traces; I saw their feet on a level with our heads; one strain more, and the coach would have followed, but certainly not upon its wheels. I thought that it was all over with us. The cossacks who

escorted the puissant cause of this peril, seeing our critical situation, had the prudence to avoid following us, for fear of further exciting our horses: I, without even thinking of springing from the carriage, had commended my soul to God, when, suddenly, Antonio disappeared. I thought he was killed: the head and leather curtains of the calèche concealed the scene from me; but at the same moment I felt the horses stop. "We are saved," cried Antonio. This *we* touched me, for he himself was beyond all danger, after having succeeded in getting out of the calèche without accident. His rare presence of mind had indicated to him the moment favourable to springing out with the least risk: afterwards, with that agility which strong emotions impart, but which they cannot explain, he found himself, without knowing how, upon the top of the bank, at the heads of the two horses who had scaled it, and whose desperate efforts threatened to destroy us all. The carriage was just about to overturn when the horses were stopped; but Antonio's activity gave time to the others to follow his example; the coachman was in a moment at the heads of the two other horses, while the courier propped up the coach. At the same moment the cossack-guard of the elephant, who had put their horses to a gallop, arrived to our assistance; they made me alight, and helped my people to hold the still trembling horses. Never was an accident more nearly being disastrous, and never was one repaired at less cost. Not a screw of the coach was disturbed, and scarcely a strap of harness broken.

At the expiration of a quarter of an hour, Antonio was seated quietly by my side in the calèche; in

another ten minutes, he was as fast asleep as if he had not been the means of saving all our lives.

While they put the harness in order, I approached the cause of all this mischief. The groom of the elephant had prudently led him into the wood adjoining one of the side-alleys of the road. The formidable beast appeared to me yet larger after the peril to which he had exposed me. His trunk, busy in the top of the birch-trees, reminded me of a boa twisted among the palms. I began to make excuses for my horses, and left him, giving thanks to God for having escaped a death which at one moment appeared to me inevitable.

I am now at Moscow. An excessive heat has not ceased to reign there for several months; I find again the same temperature that I left: the summer is indeed quite extraordinary. The drought sends up into the air, above the most populous quarters of the city, a reddish dust, which, towards evening, produces effects as fantastical as the Bengal lights. This evening, at sunset, I contemplated the spectacle from the Kremlin, the survey of which I have made with as much admiration, and almost as much surprise, as I did at first.

The city of men was separated from the palace of giants, by a glory like one of Corregio's: the whole was a sublime union of the marvels of painting and poetry.

The Kremlin, as the loftiest point in the picture, received on its breast the last streaks of day, while the mists of night had already enveloped the rest of

the city. The imagination owned no bounds; the universe, the infinite Deity itself, seemed to be grasped by the witness of the majestic spectacle. It was the living model of Martin's most extraordinary paintings. My heart beat with fear and admiration: I saw the whole cohort of the supernatural inmates of the fortress; their forms shone like demons painted on a ground of gold; they moved glittering towards the regions of night, from which they seemed about to tear off the veil; I expected to hear the thunder: it was fearfully beautiful.

The white and irregular masses of the palace reflected unequally the obliquely-borne beams of a flickering twilight. This variety of shades was the effect of the different degrees of inclination of different walls, and of the projections and recesses which constitute the beauty of the barbaric architecture, whose bold caprices, if they do not charm the taste, speak impressively to the imagination. It was so astonishing, so beautiful, that I have not been able to resist once more naming the Kremlin.

But let not the reader be alarmed — this is an adieu.

The plaintive song of some workmen, echoing from vault to vault, from battlement to battlement, from precipice to precipice — precipices built by man — penetrated to my heart, which was absorbed in inexpressible melancholy. Wandering lights appeared in the depths of the royal edifice; and along the deserted galleries, and empty barbicans, came the voice of man, which I was astonished to hear at that hour among these solitary palaces; as was likewise the bird of night, who, disturbed in his mysterious loves, fled from the light of the torches, and, seeking refuge

among the highest steeples and towers, there spread the news of the unusual disorder.

That disorder was the consequence of the works commanded by the emperor to welcome his own approaching arrival: he fêtes himself, and illuminates his Kremlin when he comes to Moscow. Meantime, as the darkness increased, the city brightened: its illuminated streets, shops, coffee-houses, and theatres, rose out of the dark like magic. The day was also the anniversary of the emperor's coronation—another motive for illuminating. The Russians have so many joyful days to celebrate that, were I in their place, I should never put out my lamps.

The approach of the magician has already begun to be felt. Three weeks ago Moscow was only inhabited by merchants, who proceeded about their business in drowskas: now, noble coursers, splendid equipages, gilded uniforms, great lords, and numerous valets, enliven the streets and obstruct the porticos. "The emperor is thirty leagues off: who knows if he will not be here to-morrow, or perhaps to-night? It is said he was here yesterday, incognito: who can prove that he is not here now?" And this doubt, this hope, animates all hearts; it changes the faces and languages of all persons, and the aspect of every thing. Moscow, the merchant-city, is now as much troubled and agitated as a citizen's wife expecting the visit of a great nobleman. Deserted palaces and gardens are re-opened; flowers and torches vie with each other in brilliancy; flattering speeches begin to murmur through the crowd: I fear lest I myself should catch the influence of the illusion, if not

through selfish motives, at least from a love of the marvellous.

An Emperor of Russia at Moscow, is a king of Assyria in Babylon.

His presence is at this moment, they say, working miracles at Borodino. An entire city is there created — a city just sprung out of the desert, and destined to endure for a week: even gardens have been planted there round a palace; the trees, destined soon to die, have been brought from a distance at great expense, and are so placed as to represent antique shades. The Russians, though they have no past, are, like all enlightened *parvenus*, who well know what is thought of their sudden fortunes, more particularly fond of imitating the effects of time. In this world of fairy work, all that speaks of duration is imitated by things the most ephemeral. Several theatres are also raised on the plain of Borodino; and the drama serves as an interlude between the warlike pantomimes.

The programme of the fête is the exact repetition of the battle, which we called Moskowa, and which the Russians have christened Borodino. Wishing to approach as nearly as possible to the reality, they have convoked from the most distant parts of the empire, all the surviving veterans of 1812 who were in the action. The reader may imagine the astonishment and distress of these brave men, suddenly torn from their repose, and obliged to repair from the extremities of Siberia, Kamtschatka, Lapland, the Caspian, or the Caucasus, to a theatre which they are told was the theatre of their glory — not their fortune, but their renown, a miserable recompence for a superhuman devotion. Why revive these questions and

recollections? Why this bold evocation of so many mute and forgotten spectres? It is the last judgment of the conscripts of 1812. If they wished to make a satire upon military life, they could not take a better course: it was thus that Holbein, in his Dance of Death, caricatured human life. Numbers of these men, awakened out of their sleep on the brink of their graves, have not mounted a horse for many years; and here they are obliged, in order to please a master whom they have never seen, again to play over their long-forgotten parts. They have so much dread of not satisfying the expectations of the capricious sovereign who thus troubles their old age, that they say the representation of the battle is more terrible to them than was the reality. This useless ceremony, this fanciful war, will make an end of the soldiers whom the real event spared: it is a cruel pleasure, worthy of one of the successors of the czar who caused living bears to be introduced in the masquerade that he gave on the nuptials of his buffoon: that czar was Peter the Great. All these diversions have their source in the same feeling—contempt for human life.

The emperor had permitted me—which means to say that he commanded me—to be present at Borodino. It is a favour of which I feel myself to have become unworthy. I did not at the time reflect upon the extreme difficulty of the part a Frenchman would have to perform in this historical comedy; and I also had not seen the monstrous work of the Kremlin, which he would expect me to praise; above all, I was then ignorant of the history of the Princess Troubetzkoï, which I have the greater difficulty in

banishing from my mind, because I may not speak of it. These reasons united have induced me to decide upon remaining in oblivion. It is an easy resolve; for the contrary would give me trouble, if I may judge by the useless efforts of a crowd of Frenchmen and foreigners of all countries, who in vain solicit permission to be present at Borodino.

All at once the police of the camp has assumed extreme severity: these new precautions are attributed to unpleasant revelations that have been recently made. The sparks of revolt are every where feeding under the ashes of liberty. I do not know even whether, under actual circumstances, it would be possible for me to avail myself of the invitation the emperor gave me, both at Petersburg and, afterwards when I took leave of him, at Peterhoff. "I shall be very glad if you will attend the ceremony at Borodino, where we lay the first stone of a monument in honour of General Bagration." These were his last words. *

I see here persons who were invited, yet are not able to approach the camp. Permissions are refused to every body, except a few privileged Englishmen and some members of the diplomatic corps. All the rest, young and old, military men and diplomatists, foreigners and Russians, have returned to Moscow, mortified by their unavailing efforts. I have written to a person connected with the emperor's household, regretting my inability to avail myself of the favour his Majesty had accorded in permitting me to witness

* I learnt afterwards, at Petersburg, that orders had been given to permit my reaching Borodino, where I was expected.

the manœuvres, and pleading as an excuse the state of my eyes, which are not yet cured.

The dust of the camp is, I am told, insupportable to every body; it might cost me the loss of my sight. The Duke of Leuchtenberg must be endowed with an unusual quantum of indifference to be able coolly to witness the spectacle prepared for him. They assure me that in the representation of the battle, the emperor will command the corps of Prince Eugene, father of the young duke.

I should regret not seeing a spectacle so curious in its moral aspect, if I could be present as a disinterested spectator; but, without having the renown of a father to maintain, I am a son of France, and I feel it is not for me to find any pleasure in witnessing a representation of war, made at great cost, solely with the view of exalting the national pride of the Russians, on the occasion of our disasters. As to the sight itself, I can picture it very easily; I have seen plenty of straight lines in Russia. Besides, in reviews and mock fights, the eye never gets beyond a great cloud of dust.

The Russians have reason to pride themselves on the issue of the campaign of 1812; but the general who laid its plan, he who first advised the gradual retreat of the Russian army towards the centre of the empire, with the view of enticing the exhausted French after it, — the man, in fact, to whose genius Russia owed her deliverance — Prince Witgenstein, is not represented in this grand repetition; because, unfortunately for him, he is living, half disgraced; he resides on his estates; his name will not be pronounced at Borodino, though an eternal monument is

to be raised to the glory of General Bagration, who fell on the field of battle.

Under despotic governments, dead warriors are great favourites: here, behold one decreed to be the hero of a campaign in which he bravely fell, but which he never directed.

This absence of historical probity, this abuse of the will of one man, who imposes his views upon all, who dictates to the people whatever they are to think on events of national interest, appears to me the most revolting of all the impieties of arbitrary government. Strike, torture bodies, but do not crush minds: let man judge of things according to the intimations of Providence, according to his conscience and his reason. The people must be called impious who devoutly submit to this continual violation of the respect due to all that is most holy in the sight of God and man, — the sanctity of truth.

I have received an account of the manœuvres at Borodino, which is not calculated to calm my wrath.

Every body has read a description of the battle of Moskowa, and history has viewed it as one of those that we have won; for it was hazarded by the Emperor Alexander against the advice of his generals, as a last effort to save his capital, which capital was taken four days later; though a heroic conflagration, combined with a deadly frost, and with the improvidence of our chieftain, blinded on this occasion by an excess of confidence in his lucky star, decided our disaster. Thus favoured by the issue of the campaign, here is

the Emperor of Russia flattering himself with treating as a victory, a battle lost by his army within four days' journey of his capital: he has distorted a military scene which he professes to reproduce with scrupulous exactitude. The following is the lie which he has given to history in the eyes of all Europe.

When they came to the moment in which the French, who had been dreadfully galled by the Russian artillery, charged and carried the batteries that decimated them with the daring that is so well known, the Emperor Nicholas, instead of suffering, as both his justice and dignity demanded, that the celebrated manœuvre should be executed, became the flatterer of the lowest of his people, and caused the corps which represented the division of our army to which we owed the defeat of the Russians and the capture of Moscow, to fall back a distance of three leagues. Imagine my gratitude to God for having given me grace to refuse being present at this lying pantomime!

The military comedy is followed by an order of the day, which will be considered outrageous in Europe, if it be published there in the shape that it is here. According to this singular exposé of the ideas of an individual — not the events of a campaign — "It was voluntarily that the Russians retired beyond Moscow, which proves that they did not lose the battle of Borodino; (why then did they decline continuing it?) and the bones of their presumptuous enemies," adds the order of the day, "scattered from the holy city to Niemen, attest the triumph of the defenders of the country."

Without waiting for the solemn entry of the em-

peror into Moscow, I shall leave in two days' time for Petersburg.

Here end the chapters that were written by the traveller in the form of letters to his friends: the relation which follows completes his recollections; it was written at various places, commencing at Petersburg, in 1839, afterwards being continued in Germany, and more recently at Paris.

CHAP. XXXVI.

RETURN FROM MOSCOW TO PETERSBURG. — HISTORY OF M. PERNET, A FRENCH PRISONER IN RUSSIA. — HIS ARREST. — CONDUCT OF HIS FELLOW TRAVELLER. — THE FRENCH CONSUL AT MOSCOW. — EFFECTS OF IMAGINATION. — ADVICE OF A RUSSIAN. — GREAT NOVGOROD. — SOUVENIRS OF IVAN IV. — ARRIVAL AT PETERSBURG. — M. DE BARANTE. — SEQUEL OF THE HISTORY OF M. PERNET. — INTERIOR OF A MOSCOW PRISON. — A VISIT TO COLPINA. — ORIGIN OF THE LAVAL FAMILY IN RUSSIA. — THE ACADEMY OF PAINTING. — THE ARTS IN RUSSIA. — M. BRULOW. — INFLUENCE OF THE NORTH UPON THE ARTS. — MADEMOISELLE TAGLIONI AT PETERSBURG. — ABOLITION OF THE UNIATES. — SUPERIORITY OF A REPRESENTATIVE FORM OF GOVERNMENT. — DEPARTURE FROM RUSSIA. — THE FEELINGS OF THE AUTHOR. — A SINCERE LETTER. — REASONS FOR NOT RETURNING THROUGH POLAND.

At the moment I was about to quit Moscow, a singular circumstance attracted all my attention, and obliged me to delay my departure.

I had ordered post-horses at seven o'clock in the morning: to my great surprise my valet-de-chambre awoke me at four, and on my asking the cause of this unnecessary hurry, he answered that he did not like to delay informing me of a fact which he had just learnt, and which appeared to him very serious. The following is the sum of what he related.

A Frenchman, whose name is M. Louis Pernet, and who arrived a few days ago in Moscow, where he lodged at a public hotel, has been arrested in the middle of the night — this very night, — and, after being deprived of his papers, has been taken to the

city prison, and there placed in a cell. Such is the account which the waiter at our inn gave to my servant, who, after many questions, further learnt that M. Pernet is a young man about twenty-six years old, and of feeble frame, which redoubles the fears that are entertained for him; that he passed through Moscow last year, when he stayed at the house of a Russian friend, who afterwards took him into the country. This Russian is now absent, and the unfortunate prisoner has no other acquaintance here except another Frenchman, a M. R——, in whose company, it is said, he has been travelling from the north of Russia. This M. R—— lodged in the same hôtel with the prisoner. His name struck me the moment I heard it, for it is the same as that of the dark man with whom I dined a few days before at the house of the governor of Nijni. The reader may recollect that his physiognomy had been to me a subject for meditation. Again to stumble upon this personage, in connection with the event of the night, appeared to me quite a circumstance for a novel, and I could scarcely believe what I heard: nevertheless I immediately rose, and sought the waiter myself, to hear from his own lips the version of the story, and to ascertain beyond doubt the correctness of the name of M. R——, whose identity I was particularly desirous of ascertaining. The waiter told me, that having been sent on an errand by a foreigner about to leave Moscow, he was at Kopp's hôtel at the moment when the police left it, and he added that M. Kopp had related to him the affair, which he recounted in words that exactly accorded with the statement of Antonio.

As soon as I was dressed, I repaired to M. R——, and found, true enough, that it was the bronze-complexioned man of Nijni. The only difference was, that at Moscow he had an agitated air, very different from his former immobility. I found him out of bed; we recognised each other in a moment; but when I told him the object of my very early morning call, he appeared embarrassed.

"It is true that I have travelled," he said, "with M. Pernet, but it was by mere chance; we met at Archangel, and from thence have proceeded in company: he has a very poor constitution, and his weak health gave me much uneasiness during the journey: I rendered him the services that humanity called for, but nothing more; I am not one of his friends; I know nothing of him."

"I know still less of him," I replied; "but we are all three Frenchmen, and we owe each other mutual aid in a country where our liberty and our life may be menaced any moment by a power which cannot be seen till it strikes."

"Perhaps M. Pernet," replied M. R——, "has got himself into this scrape by some imprudence. A stranger as well as he is, and without credit, what can I do? If he is innocent, the arrest will be followed by no serious consequences; if he is culpable, he will have to submit to the punishment. I can do nothing for him, I owe him nothing; and I advise you, sir, to be yourself very cautious in any steps you may take in his favour, as well as in your language respecting the affair."

"But what will decide his guilt?" I exclaimed. "It will be first of all necessary to see him, to know

to what he attributes this arrest, and to ask him what can be said or done for him."

"You forget the country we are in," answered M. R——; "he is in a dungeon; how could we get access to him? the thing is impossible."

"What is also impossible," I replied, rising, "is that Frenchmen — that any men, should leave their countryman in a critical situation, without even inquiring the cause of his misfortune."

On leaving this very prudent travelling companion, I began to think the case more serious than I had at first supposed; and I considered that, to understand the true position of the prisoner, I ought to address myself to the French consul. Being obliged to wait the usual hour for seeing that personage, I ordered back my post-horses, to the great surprise and displeasure of the feldjäger, as they were already at the door when I gave the countermand.

At ten o'clock, I made to the French consul the above relation of facts; and found that official protector of the French full as prudent, and yet more cold, than Doctor R—— had appeared to me. Since he has lived in Moscow, this consul has become almost a Russian. I could not make out whether his answers were dictated by a fear founded on a knowledge of the usages of the country, or by a sentiment of wounded self-love, of ill-understood personal dignity.

"M. Pernet," he said, "passed six months in Moscow and its environs, without having thought fit, during all that time, to make the smallest approach towards the consul of France. M. Pernet must look, therefore, to himself alone to get out of the situation

in which his heedlessness has involved him. This answer," added the consul, "is perhaps not sufficiently distinct." He then concluded by repeating that he neither ought, nor could, nor would, mix himself up with the affair.

In vain did I represent to him, that, in his capacity as our consul, he owed to every Frenchman, without distinction of persons, and even if they failed in the laws of etiquette, his aid and protection; that the present question was not one of ceremony, but of the liberty and perhaps the life of a fellow countryman; and that, under such a misfortune, all resentment should be at least suspended till the danger was over. I could not extract one word, not one single expression of interest in favour of the prisoner; nor even, when I reasoned on public grounds, and spoke of the dignity of France, and the safety of all Frenchmen who travelled in Russia, could I make any impression; in short, this second attempt aided the cause no better than the first.

Nevertheless, though I had not even known M. Pernet by name, and though I had no motive to take any personal interest in him, yet, as chance had made me acquainted with his misfortune, it seemed to me that it was no more than my duty to give him all the aid that lay in my power. I was at this moment strongly struck with a truth which is no doubt often present to the thoughts of others, but which had only until then vaguely and fleetingly passed before my mind — the truth that imagination serves to extend the sphere of pity, and to render it more active. I went even so far as to conclude in my own mind, that a man without imagination would be absolutely

devoid of feeling. All my imaginative or creative faculties were busy in presenting to me, in spite of myself, this unhappy, unknown man, surrounded by the phantoms of his prison solitude: I suffered with him, I felt his feelings, I shared his fears; I saw him, forsaken by all the world, discovering that his state was hopeless: for who would ever interest themselves in a prisoner in this land, so distant and so different from ours, in a society where friends meet together for enjoyment, and separate in adversity. What a stimulus was this thought to my commiseration! "You believe yourself to be alone in the world; you are unjust towards Providence, which sends you a friend and a brother." These were the words which I mentally addressed to the victim.

Meanwhile, the unhappy man would hope for no succour, and every hour that passed in his dreadful silence and monotony would plunge him deeper in despair: night would come with its train of spectres; and then what terrors, what regrets would seize upon him! How did I pant to tell him that the zeal of a stranger should replace the loss of the faithless protectors on whom he had a right to depend. But all means of communication were impossible: the dismal hallucinations of the dungeon pursued me in the light of the sun, and, notwithstanding the bright arch of heaven above my head, shut me up in dark, dank vaults; for in my distress, forgetting that the Russians apply the classic architecture to the construction even of prisons, I dreamt not of Roman colonnades, but of Gothic subterranes. Had my imagination less deeply impressed me with all these things, I should have been less active and persevering in my efforts in favour of

an unknown individual. I was followed by a spectre; and to rid myself of it, no efforts could have been too great.

To have insisted on entering the prison would have been a step no less useless than dangerous. After long and painful doubt, I thought of another plan: I had made the acquaintance of several of the most influential people in Moscow; and though I had two days ago taken leave of every body, I resolved to risk giving my confidence to the man for whom I had, among all the others, conceived the highest opinion.

Not only must I here avoid using his name, I must also take care not to allude to him in any way by which he could be identified.

When he saw me enter his room he at once guessed the business that brought me, and without giving me time to explain myself, he told me that by a singular chance he knew M. Pernet personally, and believed him innocent, which caused his situation to appear inexplicable; but that he was sure political considerations could have alone led to such an imprisonment, because the Russian police never unmasks itself unless compelled; that no doubt the existence of this foreigner had been supposed to have been altogether unknown in Moscow; but that now the blow was struck, his friends could only injure him by showing themselves; for if it were known that parties were interested in him, it would render his position far worse, as he would be removed to avoid all discovery and to stifle all complaints: he added therefore, that, for the victim's sake, extreme circumspection was necessary. "If once he departs for Siberia, God only can say

when he will return," exclaimed my counsellor; who afterwards endeavoured to make me understand that he could not openly avow the interest he took in a suspected Frenchman; for, being himself suspected of liberal principles, a word from him, saying merely that he knew the prisoner, would suffice to exile the latter to the farther end of the world. He concluded by saying, "You are neither his relation nor his friend; you only take in him the interest that you believe you ought to take in a countryman, in a man whom you know to be in trouble; you have already acquitted yourself of the duty that this praiseworthy sentiment imposes on you; you have spoken to your consul; you had now, believe me, better abstain from any further steps; it will do no good, and you will compromise yourself for the man whose defence you gratuitously undertake. He does not know you, he expects nothing from you; continue, then, your journey, you will disappoint no hopes that he has conceived; I will keep my eye on him; I cannot appear in the affair, but I have indirect means which may be useful, and I promise to employ them to the utmost of my power. Once again, then, follow my advice, and pursue your journey."

"If I were to set out," I exclaimed, "I should not have a moment's peace; I should be pursued by a feeling that would amount to remorse, when I recollected that the unfortunate man has me only to befriend him, and that I have abandoned him without doing any thing."

"Your presence here," he answered, "will not even serve to console him, as he is and must continue wholly ignorant of the interest you take in him."

"There are, then, no means of gaining access to the dungeon?"

"None," replied the individual addressed, not without some marks of impatience at my thus persisting. "Were you his brother you could do no more for him here than you have done. Your presence at Petersburg may, on the contrary, be useful to M. Pernet. You can inform the French ambassador all that you know about this imprisonment; for I doubt whether he will hear any thing of it from your consul. A representation made to the minister by a personage in the position of your ambassador, and by a man possessing the character of M. de Barante, will do more to hasten the deliverance of your countryman than you, and I, and any twenty others could do in Moscow."

"But the emperor and his ministers are at Borodino or at Moscow," I answered, unwilling to take a refusal.

"All the ministers have not followed his Majesty," he replied, still in a polite tone, but with increasing and scarcely-concealed ill-humour. "Besides, at the worst, their return must be waited. You have, I repeat, no other course to take, unless you would injure the man whom you wish to save, and expose yourself also to many unpleasant surmises, or perhaps to something worse," he added, in a significant manner.

Had the person to whom I addressed myself been a placeman, I should have already fancied I saw the cossacks advancing to seize and convey me to a dungeon like that of M. Pernet's.

I felt that the patience of my adviser was at an

end; I had nothing, in fact, to reply to his arguments: I therefore retired, promising to leave, and gratefully thanking him for his counsel.

As it is obvious I can do nothing here I will leave at once, I said to myself: but the slow motions of my feldjäger took up the rest of the morning, and it was past four in the afternoon before I was on the road to Petersburg.

The sulkiness of the courier, the want of horses, felt every where on the road on account of relays being retained for the household of the emperor and for military officers, as well as for couriers proceeding from Borodino to Petersburg, made my journey long and tedious: in my impatience I insisted on travelling all night; but I gained nothing by this haste, being obliged, for want of horses, to pass six whole hours at Great Novgorod, within fifty leagues of Petersburg.

I was scarcely in a fitting mood to visit the cradle of the Slavonian empire, and which became also the tomb of its liberty. The famous church of Saint Sophia encloses the sepulchres of Vladimir Iaroslawitch, who died in 1051, of his mother Anne, and of an emperor of Constantinople. It resembles the other Russian churches, and perhaps is not more authentic than the pretended ancient cathedral that contains the bones of Minine at Nijni Novgorod. I no longer believe in the dates of any old monuments that are shown me in Russia. But I still believe in the names of its rivers: the Volkoff represents to me the frightful scenes connected with the siege of this republican city, taken, retaken, and decimated by Ivan the Terrible. I could fancy I saw the imperial hyena,

presiding over carnage and pestilence, couched among the ruins of the city; and the bloody corpses of his subjects seemed to issue out of the river that was choked with their bodies, to prove to me the horrors of intestine wars. It is worthy of remark, that the correspondence of the Archbishop Pinen, and of other principal citizens of Novgorod, with the Poles, was the cause which brought the evil on the city, where thirty thousand innocent persons perished in the combat, and in the executions and massacres invented and presided over by the czar. There were days on which six hundred were at once executed before his eyes; and all these horrors were enacted to punish a crime unpardonable from that epoch — the crime of clandestine communication with the Poles. This took place nearly three hundred years ago, in 1570. Great Novgorod has never recovered the stroke; she could have replaced her dead, but she could not survive the abolition of her democratic institutions: her whitewashed houses are no longer stained with blood; they appear as if they had been built only yesterday; but her streets are deserted, and three parts of her ruins are spread over the plain, beyond the narrow bounds of the actual city, which is but a shadow and a name. This is all that remains of the famous republic of the middle ages. Where are the fruits of the revolutions which never ceased to saturate the now almost desert soil with blood? Here, all is as silent as it was before the history. God has only too often had to teach us, that objects which men, blinded with pride, viewed as a worthy end of their efforts, were really only a means of employing their superfluous powers in the

effervescence of youth. Such are the principles of more than one heroic action.

For three centuries the bell of the *vetché** has ceased to summon the people of Novgorod, formerly the most glorious and the most turbulent of the Russian populations, to deliberate upon their affairs. The will of the czars stifles in every heart all sentiments, even regret for the memory of effaced glory. Some years ago, atrocious scenes occurred between the cossacks and the inhabitants of the country in the military colonies established in the vicinity of the decayed city. But the insurrection was stifled, and every thing has returned to its accustomed order, that is, to the silence and peace of the tomb.

I was very happy to leave this abode, formerly famous for the disorders of liberty, now desolated by what is called *good order*, — a word which is here equivalent to that of death.

Although I made all possible haste, I did not reach Petersburg until the fourth day; immediately after leaving my carriage I repaired to M. de Barante's.

He was quite ignorant of the arrest of M. Pernet, and appeared surprised to hear of it through me, especially when he learnt that I had been nearly four days on the road. His astonishment redoubled when I related to him my unavailing endeavours to influence our consul — that official protector of the French — to take some step in favour of the prisoner.

The attention with which M. de Barante listened to me, the assurance which he gave me that he would neglect nothing to clear up this affair, the importance

* Popular assembly.

with which he appeared to invest the smallest facts that could interest the dignity of France and the safety of her citizens, put my conscience at ease, and dissipated the phantoms of my imagination. The fate of M. Pernet was in the hands of his natural protector, whose ability and character became better sureties for the safety of this unfortunate man than my zeal and powerless solicitations. I felt I had done all that I could for him and for the honour of my country. During the twelve or fourteen days that I remained at Petersburg, I purposely abstained from pronouncing the name of Pernet before the ambassador; and I left Russia without knowing the end of a history which had so much absorbed and interested me.

But, while journeying rapidly towards France, my mind was often carried back to the dungeons of Moscow. If I had known all that was passing there, it would have been yet more painfully excited.

Not to leave the reader in the ignorance in which I remained for nearly six months respecting the fate of the prisoner at Moscow, I insert here all that I have learnt since my return to France respecting the imprisonment of M. Pernet, and his deliverance.

One day, near the end of the winter of 1840, I was informed that a stranger was at my door, and wished to speak with me. I desired that he would give his name: he replied that he would give it to me only. I refused to see him; he persisted; I again refused. At last, renewing his entreaties, he sent up a line of writing without any signature, to say that I could not refuse listening to a man who owed to me his life, and who only wished to thank me.

This language appeared extraordinary. I ordered the stranger to be introduced. On entering the room he said—

"Sir, it was only yesterday I learnt your address! my name is Pernet; and I come to express to you my gratitude; for I was told at Petersburg that it is to you I owe my liberty, and consequently my life."

After the first surprise which such an address caused me, I began to notice the person of M. Pernet. He is one of that numerous class of young Frenchmen who have the appearance and the temperament of the men of southern lands; his eyes and hair are black, his cheeks hollow, his countenance every where equally pale; he is short and slight in figure; and he appeared to be suffering, though rather morally than physically. He discovered that I knew some members of his family settled in Savoy, who are among the most respectable people of that land of honest men. He told me that he was an advocate; and he related that he had been detained in the prison of Moscow for three weeks, four days of which time he was placed in the cells. We shall see by his recital the way in which a prisoner is treated in this abode. My imagination had not approached the reality.

The two first days he was left *without food!* No one came near him; and he believed for forty-eight hours that it was determined to starve him to death in his prison. The only sound that he heard was that of the strokes of the rod, which, from five o'clock in the morning until night, were inflicted upon the unhappy slaves who were sent by their masters to this place, to receive correction. Add to that frightful sound, the sobs, the tears, the screams of the victims, mingled with the menaces and imprecations of the tormentors, and you will form some faint idea of the moral as well as physical sufferings of our unhappy countryman during four weary days, and while still remaining ignorant of his crime.

After having thus penetrated against his will into the profound mystery of a Russian prison, he believed, not without reason, that he was destined to end his days there; for he said to himself, "If there had been any intention to release me, it is not here that I should be confined by men who fear nothing so much as to have their secret barbarity divulged."

A slight partition alone separated his narrow cell from the inner court, where these executions were perpetrated.

The rod, which, since the amelioration of manners, usually replaces the knout of Mongolic memory, is formed of a cane split into three pieces, an instrument which fetches off the skin at every stroke; at the fifth, the victim loses nearly all power to cry, his weakened voice can then only utter a prolonged, sobbing groan. This horrible rattle in the throat of the tortured creatures pierced the heart of the prisoner, and presaged to him a fate which he dared not look in the face.

M. Pernet understands Russian; he was therefore present, without seeing any thing, at many private tortures; among others, at those of two young girls, who worked under a fashionable milliner in Moscow. These unfortunate creatures were flogged before the eyes even of their mistress, who reproached them with having lovers, and with having so far forgotten themselves as to bring them into her house — the house of a milliner! — what an enormity! Meanwhile this virago exhorted the executioners to strike harder: one of the girls begged for mercy: they said that she was nearly killed, that she was covered with blood. No matter! She had carried her audacity so far as to say that she was less culpable than her mistress; and the latter redoubled her severity. M. Pernet assured me, observing that he thought I might doubt his assertion, that each of the unhappy girls received, at different intervals, a hundred and eighty blows. "I suffered too much in counting them," he added, "to be deceived in the number."

A man feels the approach of insanity when present at such horrors, and yet unable to succour the victims.

Afterwards, serfs and servants were brought by stewards, or sent by their masters, with the request that they might be punished: there was nothing, in short, but scenes of atrocious vengeance and frightful despair, all hidden from the public eye.* The unhappy prisoner longed for the obscurity of night, because the darkness brought with it silence; and though his thoughts then terrified him, he preferred the evils of imagination to those of reality. This is always the case with real sufferers. It is

* See, in Dickens's American Journey, extracts from the United States' papers, concerning the treatment of the slaves; presenting a remarkable resemblance between the excesses of despotism and the abuses of democracy.

only the dreamers, who have comfortable beds and good tables, that pretend the evils we fancy exceed those that we feel.

At last, after four times twenty-four hours of a torment which would, I think, surpass all our efforts to picture, M. Pernet was taken from his dungeon, still without any explanation, and transferred to another part of the prison.

From thence he wrote to M. de Barante, by General ——, on whose good offices he thought he could reckon.

The letter did not reach its address; and when afterwards the writer demanded an explanation of this circumstance, the General excused himself by subterfuges, and concluded by swearing to M. Pernet, on the gospel, that the letter had not been put in the hands of the minister of police, and never would be! This was the utmost extent of devotion that the prisoner could obtain from his *friend*: and this is the fate of human affections when they pass under the yoke of despotism.

At the end of three weeks — which had been an eternity to M. Pernet — he was released without any form of process, and without even being able to learn the cause of his imprisonment.

His reiterated questions, addressed to the director of police in Moscow, procured for him no explanations: he was merely told that his ambassador had claimed him; and this was accompanied with an order to leave Russia. He asked, and obtained permission to take the route of Petersburg.

He wished to thank the French ambassador for the liberty which he owed to him; and also to obtain some information as to the cause of the treatment he had undergone. M. de Barante endeavoured, but in vain, to divert him from the project of addressing M. de Benkendorf, the minister of the Imperial police. The liberated man demanded an audience: it was granted him. He said to the minister that, being ignorant of the cause of the punishment that he had received, he wished to know his crime before leaving Russia.

The statesman briefly answered, that he would do well to carry his inquiries on the subject no further, and dismissed him, repeating the order that he should, without delay, leave the empire.

Such is all the information that I could obtain from M. Pernet. This young man, like every one else who has lived some time in Russia, has acquired a mysterious and reserved

tone of language, to which foreigners are as liable as the native inhabitants. One would say that in that empire, a secret weighs upon all minds.

On my continuing my inquiries, M. Pernet further stated, that on his first journey to the country, they had given him, in his passport, the title of merchant, and on the second, that of advocate. He added a more serious circumstance, namely, that before reaching Petersburg, while in a steam-boat on the Baltic, he had freely expressed his opinion of Russian despotism before several individuals whom he did not know.

He assured me, on leaving, that his memory could recall no other circumstance that could account for the treatment he had received at Moscow. I have never seen him since; though, by a singular chance, I met, two years after, a member of his family, who said he knew of the services I had rendered to his young relative, and thanked me for them. This family, I repeat, are respected by all who know them in the kingdom of Sardinia.

The last moments of my stay in Petersburg were employed in inspecting various establishments that I had not seen on my visit to that city.

Prince —— showed me, among other curiosities, the immense works of Colpina, the arsenal of the Russian arsenals, which is situated some leagues from the capital. In this manufactory are prepared all the articles required for the Imperial marine. Colpina is reached by a road seven leagues in length, the last half of which is execrable. The establishment is directed by an Englishman, M. Wilson, who is honoured with the rank of General (all Russia is converted into an army). He exhibited to us his machines, like a true Russian engineer, not permitting us to overlook a nail or a screw: under his escort we surveyed about twenty workshops, of enormous size. The extreme

complaisance of the director deserved much gratitude, though I expressed but little, and that little was more than I felt: fatigue renders a man almost as ungrateful as ennui.

The object that we most admired in this tedious inspection was a machine of Bramah's, invented to prove the strength of the largest chain-cables: the enormous links that can resist the force of this machine may hold the mightiest vessels of war at anchor in the highest seas. An ingenious application of water-pressure, to measure the strength of iron, is the invention which appeared to me so marvellous.

We also examined sluices destined to serve in extraordinary floods of water. It is especially in spring-time that they are useful. Without them, the stream which moves the various machines would cause incalculable damage. The canals of these sluices are lined with thick sheets of copper, because that metal is found to resist the winters better than granite. I was told that I should see nothing like them elsewhere.

When we entered the carriage to return to Petersburg, it was already night, and very cold. The length of the road was lightened by a charming conversation, of which I have retained one anecdote. It will serve to prove to what extent the creative power of an absolute sovereign can be carried. Hitherto I had only seen it exercised upon buildings, upon the dead, upon historic facts, upon prisoners, — in short, upon all things that could not protest against an abuse of power: this time we shall see a Russian emperor imposing upon one of the most illustrious families of France, a relative of whom it knew nothing.

Under the reign of Paul I. a Frenchman of the

name of Lovel, young and agreeable in person, gained the affections of a very wealthy and high-born maiden. Her family were hostile to the union, on account of the foreigner's possessing neither name nor fortune. The two lovers, reduced to despair, had recourse to a romantic expedient. They stood in wait for the emperor, in some street by which he was to pass, threw themselves at his feet, and besought his protection. Paul, who was good-natured when he was not mad, promised the consent of the family, which he doubtless procured by more than one means, and among others, by this: "Mademoiselle Kaminska shall marry," said the emperor, "M. *the Count de Laval*, a young French *emigré* of illustrious family, and the possessor of a considerable fortune."

Thus endowed, the young Frenchman was united to the object of his affections.

To prove the words of the sovereign, *M. de Laval* caused his escutcheon to be proudly sculptured over the door of his mansion.

Unfortunately, fifteen years afterwards, a M. de Montmorency Laval journeyed into Russia; and seeing, by chance, his arms above a door, he made inquiries, and learnt the history of M. Lovel.

On his representations, the Emperor Alexander caused the escutcheon of the Lavals to be taken down, and the door of M. Lovel remained stripped of its glory; which has not, however, prevented him up to this day from doing the honours of an excellent house in Petersburg, which will be always called the Hôtel de Laval, out of respect for the memory of the Emperor Paul, to whom an expiatory veneration is indeed owing.

The day after my journey to Colpina, I visited the Academy of Painting, a superb and stately edifice, which up to the present time contains but few good works. How can they be expected in a land where the young artists wear uniform? I found all the pupils of the Academy enrolled, dressed, and commanded like marine cadets. This fact alone denotes a profound contempt for the object pretended to be patronised, or rather a great ignorance of the nature and the mysteries of art; professed indifference would be less indicative of barbarism. There is nothing free in Russia except objects for which the government does not care; it cares only too much for the arts; but it is ignorant that they cannot dispense with liberty, and that this sympathy between the works of genius and the independence of man would alone attest the nobleness of the artist's profession.

I went over numerous studios, and found there distinguished landscape-painters: their compositions display imagination and even colour. I particularly admired a picture representing St. Petersburg on a summer's night, by M. Vorobieff: it is beautiful as nature, poetical as truth. This picture reminded me of my first arrival in Russia, when the summer nights consisted of no more than two twilights: the effect of such perpetual day, which pierces through obscurity like a bright lamp through a gauze veil, could not be better rendered. I saw again the polar light, so different from the colouring of other scenes, which I had first beheld on the Baltic. To be able thus exactly to characterise the special phenomena of nature, proves a high degree of merit.

There is much talk in Russia of the talent of

Brulow. His *Last Day of Pompeii* produced, it is said, some sensation even in Italy. This enormous piece of canvass is now the glory of the Russian school: let not the reader ridicule the designation: I saw a saloon, on the door of which these words were inscribed—"*The Russian School!*" The colouring of Brulow's painting appeared to me to be false, though certainly the subject is calculated to conceal this fault: for who knows the shade of the tints that clad the structures of Pompeii on their last day? The painter has a hard, dry touch, but he exhibits power: his conceptions lack neither imagination nor originality. His heads display truth and variety: if he understood the management of the chiaro oscuro, he might some day deserve the reputation that is given to him here: at present he is deficient in natural style, in colouring, in lightness, and in grace: there is no want of a species of wild poetry in his compositions, but their general effect is disagreeable. His style, which is stiff, without being devoid of a certain nobleness, reminds one of the imitators of the school of David. In a painting of the Assumption, which we are obliged to admire at Petersburg, because it is the work of the famous Brulow, I observed clouds so heavy that they might have been sent to represent rocks at the Opera.

There are heads, however, in the Pompeii picture which discover real talent. The painting, notwithstanding its faults as a composition, would gain in celebrity by being engraved; for it is in the colouring that its chief defects lie.

It is said that since his return to Russia, the painter has lost much of his enthusiasm for the art. How

I pity him for having seen Italy, since he was obliged to return to the north! He does not work hard; and unfortunately his rapid facility, which is here viewed as a merit, appears but too plainly in his pieces. It is only by assiduous pains and labour that he could succeed in conquering the stiffness of his design, and the crudeness of his colouring. Great painters know the difficulty of learning to design without the pencil, to paint by the intershading and blending of colours, to efface from the canvass, lines which exist nowhere in nature, to show the air, which exists everywhere, to conceal art,—in short, faithfully to depict the real, yet at the same time to ennoble it.

I am told that he passes much more of his time in drinking than in working: I blame him less than I pity him. Here, every thing is good if it only tend to impart a glow: wine is the sun of Russia. If to the misery of being a Russian is added the circumstance of being a painter, the individual ought to expatriate himself. Must not the land, where there is night for three months of the year, and where the snow sheds brighter radiance than the sun, be a land of exile to the painter?

By endeavouring to reproduce the singularities of nature under these latitudes, a few character-painters may win for themselves the honour of a place on the steps of the temple of arts; but an historical painter ought to fly this climate. Peter the Great laboured in vain; nature will always place bounds to the fancies of men, were they justified by the ukases of twenty czars.

I have seen one work of M. Brulow's which is truly

admirable: it is unquestionably the best of all the modern paintings in Petersburg; though, indeed, it is a copy of an ancient chef-d'œuvre, the School of Athens, and is full as large as the original. When an individual knows how thus to reproduce one, perhaps, of Raphael's most inimitable works after his Madonnas, he ought to return to Rome, there to learn to do something better than "*The Last Day of Pompeii*" and "*The Assumption of the Virgin.*"*

The vicinity of the Pole is unfavourable to the arts, with the exception of poetry, which can sometimes dispense with all material except the human soul; it is then the volcano under the ice. But for the inhabitants of these dreadful climates, music, painting, the dance—all those pleasures of sensation which are partially independent of mind—lose their charms in losing their organs. What are Rembrandt, Correggio, Michael Angelo, and Raphael, in a dark room? The north has doubtless its own kind of beauty, but it is still a palace without light: all the attractive train of youth, with their pastimes, their smiles, their graces, and their dances, confine themselves to those blest regions where the rays of the sun, not content with gliding over the surface of the earth, warm and fertilise its bosom by piercing it from on high.

In Russia a double gloom pervades every thing—the fear of power and the want of sun. The national dances resemble rounds led by shadows under the gleam of a twilight which never ends. Maj

* M. Brülow has copied several of Raphael's works; but I was especially struck with the beauty of the one here mentioned.

demoiselle Taglioni herself (alas! for Mademoiselle Taglioni!) is not a perfect dancer at St. Petersburg. What a fall for La Sylphide! But when she walks in the streets — for she walks at present — she is followed by footmen in handsome cockades and gold lace; and the newspapers overwhelm her every morning with articles containing the most preposterous praises I have ever seen. This is all the Russians, notwithstanding their cleverness, can do for the arts and for *artistes*. What the latter want is a heaven to give them life, a public which can understand them, a society which can excite and inspire them. These are necessaries; rewards are supererogatory. It is not, however, in a country contiguous to Lapland, and governed under the system of Peter the Great, that such things are to be sought for. I must wait for the Russians' establishment in Constantinople, before I can know of what they are really capable in the fine arts and in civilisation.

The best method of patronising art is to have a sincere desire for the pleasures it procures: a nation that reaches this point of civilisation will not be long compelled to seek for artists among foreigners.

At the time of my leaving St. Petersburg, several persons were secretly deploring the abolition of the Uniates*, and recounting the arbitrary measures by which this irreligious act, celebrated as a triumph by the Greek church, has been accomplished. The unknown persecutions to which many priests among the Uniates have been exposed would be viewed as revolt-

* The Uniates are Greeks reunited to the Catholic church, and therefore regarded as schismatics by the Greek church.

ing by even the most indifferent parties; but in a country where distances and secrecy lend their aid to the most tyrannical acts, all these violences remain concealed. This reminds me of the significant words too often repeated by Russians deprived of protectors — "God is so high, and the emperor so far off!"

Here, then, is the Greek church busy making martyrs. What has become of the toleration of which it boasts before men who are ignorant of the East? Glorious confessors of the Catholic faith are now languishing in convent prisons; and their struggle, admirable in the eyes of heaven, remains unknown even to the church for whom they generously fight upon earth, — that church which is mother of all the churches, and the only church universal; for it is the only one untainted by locality, the only one which remains free, and which belongs to no particular country.*

When the sun of publicity shall rise upon Russia, how many injustices will it expose to view! — not only ancient ones, but those which are enacted daily will shock the senses of the world. They will not be sufficiently shocked; for such is the fate of truth upon earth, that, so long as people have a great interest in knowing it, they remain ignorant of it, and when at last they have their eyes opened, it has become to them no longer a matter of importance. The abuses of a destroyed power excite only cold exclamations: those who recount them, pass for ungenerous strikers

* Has it not taken three years to carry to Rome the cry of these unfortunate beings?

of the slain; whilst, on the other hand, the excesses of this iniquitous power remain carefully concealed so long as it maintains itself; for its first aim is to stifle the cries of its victim: it exterminates, but avoids lightly wounding; and applauds itself for its mercy in having recourse to none save indispensable cruelties. But its boasting is hypocritical: when the prison is as silent and closely shut as the tomb, there is no mercy in saving from the scaffold.

I left France scared by the abuses of a false liberty; I return to my country persuaded that, if logically speaking, representative government is not the most moral, it is, practically, the most wise and moderate, preserving the people on one side from democratic licence, and on the other from the most glaring abuses of despotism: I therefore ask myself if we ought not to impose a silence upon our antipathies, and submit without murmur to a necessary policy, and one which, after all, brings to nations prepared for it more good than evil. It is true that hitherto this new and wise form of government has only been able to establish itself by usurpation. Perhaps these final usurpations have been rendered inevitable by preceding errors. This is a religious question, which time, the wisest of God's ministers upon earth, will resolve to our posterity. I am here reminded of the profound idea of one of the most enlightened and cultivated intellects in Germany, M. Varnhagen von der Ense:

"I have often laboured," he wrote to me one day, "to discover who were the prime movers of revolutions; and, after thirty years' meditation, I have come to the conclusion that my earliest opinion was

right, and that they are caused by the men against whom they are directed."

Never shall I forget my feelings in travelling from Niemen to Tilsit: it was more especially then that I did justice to the observation of my host at Lübeck. A bird escaped from its cage could not have been more joyous. I can speak, I can write all that I think: I am free! were my exulting exclamations. The first real letter that I despatched to Paris was sent from this frontier: it would cause quite a sensation in the little circle of my friends, who, until they received it, had, no doubt, been the dupes of my official correspondence. The following is the copy of that letter:

"Tilsit, Thursday, 26th September, 1839.

"You will, I hope, have as much pleasure in reading the above date as I have in writing it: here I am beyond the empire of uniformity, minutiæ, and difficulties. I hear the language of freedom, and I feel as if in a vortex of pleasure, a world carried away by new ideas towards inordinate liberty. And yet I am only in Prussia: but in leaving Russia I have again found houses, the plan of which has not been dictated to a slave by an inflexible master, but which are freely built: I see a lively country freely cultivated (it is of Prussia I am speaking), and the change warms and gladdens my heart. In short, I breathe! I can write to you without carefully guarding my words for fear of the police—a precaution almost always insufficient; for there is as much of the susceptibility of self-love as of political prudence in the espionnage of the Russians. Russia is the most gloomy country, and is inhabited by the

most handsome men that I have ever beheld: a country in which women are scarcely seen, cannot be gay. Here I am, escaped from it, and without the smallest accident. I have travelled two hundred and fifty leagues in four days, by roads often wretched, often magnificent; for the Russian spirit, friend as it is to uniformity, cannot attain a real state of order: the characteristics of its administration are meddlesomeness, negligence, and corruption. A sincere man in the Empire of the Czar would pass for a fool.

"I have now a journey of two hundred leagues to perform before I reach Berlin; but I look forward to it as a mere excursion of pleasure."

Good roads throughout the distance, good inns, beds on which one may lie down, the order of houses managed by women — all seemed delightful and novel. I was particularly struck with the varied architecture of the buildings, the air of freedom in the peasants, and the gaiety of the female sex among them. Their good humour inspired me with a kind of fear: it was an independence, the consequences of which I dreaded for them, for I had myself almost lost the memory of it. I saw towns built spontaneously, before any government had imagined a plan of them. Ducal Prussia does not assuredly pass for a land of licence; and yet, in passing through the streets of Tilsit, and afterwards those of Königsberg, I could have fancied myself at a Venetian carnival. My feelings brought to my memory a German of my acquaintance, who, after having been obliged, by business, to pass whole years in Russia, was at last able to leave that country for ever. He was accompanied by a

friend; and had scarcely set foot on the deck of the English vessel, which was about to weigh anchor, when he threw himself into his companion's arms, exclaiming, "God be praised, we may now breathe freely and speak openly!"

Many people have, doubtless, felt the same sensation: but why has no traveller before recorded it? Here, without comprehending, I marvel at the *prestige* which the Russian government exercises over minds. It obtains silence, not only from its own subjects — that were little, — but it makes itself respected, even at a distance, by strangers escaped from its iron discipline. The traveller either praises it or is silent: this is a mystery which I cannot comprehend. If ever the publication of this journey should procure me an explanation of the marvel, I shall have additional reason to applaud myself for my sincerity.

I had purposed returning from Petersburg into Germany, by way of Wilna and Warsaw; but I changed that project.

Miseries like those which Poland suffers cannot be attributed entirely to fatality: in prolonged misfortunes, we may always look to faults as well as to circumstances. To a certain point, nations, like individuals, become accomplices in the fate which pursues them; they appear accountable for the reverses which, blow after blow, they have to suffer: for, to attentive eyes, destinies are only the development of characters. On perceiving the result of the errors of a people punished with so much severity, I might not be able to abstain from reflections of which I should repent. To represent their case to the oppressors would be a task we should impose upon our-

selves with a kind of joy, sustained, as we should feel, by the idea of courage and generosity which attaches to the accomplishment of a perilous, or, at least, painful duty: but to wound the heart of the victim, to overwhelm the oppressed, though even with deserved strokes, with just reproaches, is an executioner's office, to which the author who does not despise his own pen will never abase himself.

This was my reason for renouncing my proposed journey through Poland.

CHAP. XXXVII.

RETURN TO EMS. — AUTUMN IN THE VICINITY OF THE RHINE. — COMPARISON BETWEEN RUSSIAN AND GERMAN SCENERY. — THE YOUTH OF THE SOUL. — DEFINITION OF MISANTHROPY. — MISTAKE OF THE TRAVELLER REGARDING RUSSIA. — RÉSUMÉ OF THE JOURNEY. — A LAST PORTRAIT OF RUSSIA AND THE RUSSIANS. — SECRET OF THEIR POLICY. — A GLANCE AT THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. — THE TASK OF THE AUTHOR. — DANGER OF SPEAKING OF THE GREEK RELIGION IN RUSSIA. — PARALLEL BETWEEN SPAIN AND RUSSIA.

I LEFT Ems for Russia five months ago, and return to this elegant village after having made a tour of some thousand leagues. My stay here during the previous spring was disagreeable to me by reason of the crowd of bathers and drinkers: I find it delicious now that I am literally alone, with nothing to do but to enjoy a beautiful autumn sky in the midst of mountains, the solitude of which I admire; and to review my recollections, while I at the same time seek the repose I need after the rapid journey just completed.

With what a contrast am I presented! In Russia, I was deprived of all the scenes of nature; for I cannot give the name of nature to solitudes without one picturesque object, — to seas, lakes, and rivers, whose banks are on a level with the water; to marshes without bounds, and steppes without vegetation, under a sky without light. Those plains are not, in-

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deed, devoid of a kind of beauty; but grandeur without grace soon fatigues. What pleasure can the traveller have in traversing immense spaces, whose surface and whose horizon are always destitute of feature? Such monotony aggravates the fatigue of locomotion, by rendering it fruitless. Surprises must always constitute a great portion of the enjoyment of travelling; and the hope of them must always furnish much of the stimulus that keeps alive the zeal of the traveller.

It is with sensations of real happiness that I find myself at the close of the season in a varied and beautiful country. I cannot express the delight with which I stray, and for a moment lose myself among large woods, where showers of leaves have strewed the earth and obliterated the paths. I am carried back to the descriptions of René; and my heart beats as it beat formerly while reading that sorrowful and sublime conversation between nature and a human soul. That religious and lyrical prose has lost none of its power over me; and I have said to myself, astonished at my own easily-affected feelings, youth will surely never end! Sometimes I perceive through the foliage, brightened by the first hoar-frost, the vapoury distances of the valley of the Lahn, contiguous to the most beautiful river in Europe; and I greatly admire the grace and calm of the landscape.

The points of view formed by the ravines, which serve as channels for the tributaries of the Rhine, are infinitely varied; those of the Volga all resemble each other. The aspect of the elevated plains that are here called mountains, because they separate deep valleys, is in general cold and monotonous; still this cold and monotony is light, life, and motion, after the

marshes of Muscovy: the bright rays of the sun spread a southern gladness over the whole face of the northern landscape; in which the dryness of the contour and the stiffness of the broken lines are lost amid the mists of autumn.

The repose of the woods during the autumn season is very striking: it contrasts with the activity of the fields, among which man, warned by the calm forerunner of winter, hastens to complete his labours.

This instructive and solemn spectacle, which is to last as long as the world endures, interests me as much as though I had seen it for the first time, or knew that I was never to see it again: the intellectual life is nothing but a succession of discoveries. The soul, when it has not expended its vigour in the too habitual affectations of people of the world, preserves an inexhaustible faculty of surprise and curiosity; new powers are ever exciting it to new efforts; this world no longer suffices for it; it summons and it apprehends the infinite: its ideas ripen, yet they do not proceed to decay; and this it is which intimates to us that there is something beyond the things which are seen.

It is the intensity of our life which forms its variety; what is strongly felt always appears new: language partakes of this eternal freshness of impressions; each new affection imparts its special harmony to the words destined to express it: and thus it is that the colouring of style is the most certain test of the novelty—I might say, the sincerity of sentiments. When ideas are borrowed, their source is carefully concealed; but the harmony of the language never deceives,—sure proof of the sensibility of the soul.

An involuntary revelation — it bursts directly from the heart, and speaks directly to the hearts of others; art can but imperfectly supply it; it is born of emotion: in short, this music of speech reaches beyond the ideas that it conveys; it embodies also the indefinable, involuntary extension of those ideas. Herein lies the reason of Madame Sand's having so quickly obtained among us the reputation which she deserves.

Sacred love of solitude, thou art no less than a real necessary of mental life! The world is so false, that a mind imbued with a passionate love of truth must needs be disposed to shun society. Misanthropy is a calumniated sentiment; it is a hatred of lies. There are no misanthropes; but there are souls which would rather fly than feign.

Alone with God, and man becomes humble under the influence of internal sincerity; in his retreat he expiates, by silence and meditation, all the successful frauds of worldly spirits, their triumphant duplicities, their vanities, their hidden and too often rewarded treacheries: incapable of being duped, unwilling to dupé, he becomes a voluntary victim, and conceals himself with as much care as the courtiers of fashion take to display themselves. Such is undoubtedly the secret of the life of saints, — a secret easily penetrated, but a life difficult to imitate. Were I a saint I should no longer feel curiosity in travelling, nor yet a desire to relate my travels. I am seeking: the saints have found.

While thus seeking, I have surveyed the Russian empire. I wished to see a country where reigns the calm of a power assured of its own strength: but arrived there, I found only the reign of silence main-

tained by fear; and I have drawn from the spectacle a lesson very different from the one which I came to seek. Russia is a world scarcely known to foreigners: the Russians who travel to escape it, pay, when at a distance, in crafty encomiums, their tribute to their country; and the greater number of travellers who have described it to us have been unwilling to discover in it any thing but that which they went to find. If people will defend their prejudices against evidence, where is the good of travelling? When thus determined to view nations as they wish to view them, there is no longer a necessity for leaving their own country.

The following is the *résumé* of my journey, written since my return to Ems.

In Russia, all that strikes the eye, every thing that passes around, bears the impress of a regularity that is startling; and the first thought that enters the mind of the traveller, when he contemplates this symmetrical system, is that a uniformity so complete, a regularity so contrary to the natural inclinations of men, cannot have been established, and cannot be maintained except by violence. Imagination vainly implores a little variety, like a bird uselessly beating its wings against a cage. Under such a system, a man may know the first day of his life all that he will see and do until the last. This hard tyranny is called, in official language, respect for unity, love of order; and it is a fruit of despotism so precious to methodical minds, that they think they cannot pay too dear for it.

In France, I had imagined myself in accord with these rigorous disciplinarians; but since I have lived under a despotism which imposes military rule upon the population of an entire empire, I admit that I prefer a little of the disorder which announces vigour to the perfect order which destroys life.

In Russia, the government interferes with every thing and vivifies nothing. In that immense empire, the people, if not tranquil, are mute; death hovers over all heads, and strikes capriciously whom it pleases: man there has two coffins, the cradle and the tomb. The Russian mothers ought to weep the birth more than the death of their children.

I do not believe that suicide is common there: the people suffer too much to kill themselves. Singular disposition of man! — when terror presides over his life, he does not seek death; he knows what it is already.*

But if the number of suicides in Russia were ever so great, no one would know it; the knowledge of

* Dickens says — speaking of the solitary prison of Philadelphia — "Suicides are rare among the prisoners; are almost, indeed, unknown. But no argument in favour of the system can reasonably be deduced from this circumstance, although it is very often urged. All men who have made diseases of the mind their study, know perfectly well that such extreme depression and despair, as to change the whole character, and beat down all its powers of elasticity and self-resistance, may be at work within a man, and yet stop short of self-destruction." — *American Notes for General Circulation.*

The great writer, the profound moralist, the Christian philosopher from whom I borrow these lines, has not only the authority of talent, and of a style which engraves his thoughts on brass, but his opinion on this subject is law.

numbers is a privilege of the Russian police: I am ignorant whether they arrive correct before the eyes of the Emperor; but I do know that no misfortune is published under his reign until he has consented to the humiliating confession of the superiority of Providence. The pride of despotism is so great that it seeks to rival the power of God. Monstrous jealousy! into what aberrations hast thou not plunged princes and subjects! Who will dare to love truth, who will defend it in a country where idolatry is the principle of the constitution? A man who can do every thing is the crowned impersonification of a lie.

It will be understood that I am not now speaking of the Emperor Nicholas, but of the Emperor of Russia. We often hear mention made of customs which limit his power: I have been struck with its abuse, but have seen no remedy.

In the eyes of real statesmen, and of all practical minds, the laws are, I admit, less important than our precise logicians and political philosophers believe them; for it is the manner in which they are applied that decides the life of the people. True; but the life of the Russian people is more gloomy than that of any other of the European nations; and when I say the people, I speak not only of the peasants attached to the soil, but of the whole empire.

A government that makes profession of being vigorous, and that causes itself to be dreaded on every occasion, must inevitably render men miserable. Wherever the public machine is rigorously exact, there is despotism, whatever be the fiction, monarchical or democratical, which covers it. The best government is that which makes itself the least felt;

but such lightness of the yoke is only procured by the labours of genius and superior wisdom, or by a certain relaxation of social discipline. Governments, which were beneficent in the youth of nations, when men, still half savages, honoured every thing that snatched them from a state of disorder, become so again in the old age of communities. At that epoch is seen the birth of mixed institutions. But these institutions, founded on a compact between experience and passion, can suit none but already wearied populations, societies the springs of which are weakened by revolutions. From this it may be concluded, that if they are not the most powerful of political systems, they are the most gentle: the people who have once obtained them cannot too carefully strive to prolong their duration; it is that of a green old age. The old age of states, like that of men, is the most peaceable period of existence when it crowns a glorious life; but the middle age of a nation is always a time of trial and violence: Russia is passing through it.

In this country, which differs from all others, nature itself has become an accomplice in the caprices of the man who has slain liberty to deify unity; it, too, is everywhere the same: two kinds of scattered and stunted trees, the birch and the pine, spread over plains always either sandy or marshy, are the only features on the face of nature throughout that immense expanse of country which constitutes Northern Russia.

What refuge is there against the evils of society in a climate under which men cannot enjoy the country, such as it is, for more than three months of the year?

Add to this, that during the six most inclement of the winter months, they dare not breathe the free air more than two hours in the day. Such is the lot that heaven has assigned to man in these regions.

Let us see what man has done for himself. St. Petersburg is unquestionably one of the wonders of the world; Moscow is also a very picturesque city; but what can be said of the aspect of the provinces? The excess of uniformity engendered by the abuse of unity will be seen described in my chapters. The absence of soul betrays itself in every thing: each step that you take proves to you that you are among a people deprived of independence. At every twenty or thirty leagues the same town greets your eyes.

The passion of both princes and people for classic architecture, for straight lines, buildings of low elevation, and wide streets, is a contradiction of the laws of nature and the wants of life in a cold, misty country, frequently exposed to storms of wind which case the visage in ice. Throughout my journey, I was constantly but vainly endeavouring to account for this mania among the inhabitants of a country so different from those lands whence the architecture has been borrowed: the Russians cannot probably explain it any better than I, for they are no more masters of their tastes than of their actions. The fine arts, as they call them, have been imposed on the people, just as is the military exercise. The regiment, and its spirit of minutia, is the mould of Russian society.

Lofty ramparts, high and crowded edifices, the winding streets of the cities of the middle ages, would have suited better than caricatures of the

antique, the climate, and the customs of Muscovy; but the country, the wants and genius of which are least consulted by the Russians, is the country they govern.

When Peter the Great published from Tartary to Lapland his edicts of civilisation, the creations of the middle ages had long been out of date in Europe; and the Russians, even those that have been called *great*, have never known how to do more than follow the fashion.

Such disposition to imitate scarcely accords with the ambition which we attribute to them; for man does not rule the things that he copies; but every thing is contradictory in the character of this superficial people; besides, a want of invention is their peculiar characteristic. To invent, there must be independence; with them, mimicry may be seen pervading their very passions; if they wish to take their turn on the scene of the world, it is not to employ faculties which they possess, and the inaction of which torments them, it is simply to act over the history of illustrious communities; they have no creative power; comparison is their talent, imitation is their genius; naturally given to observation, they are not themselves except when aping the creations of others. Such originality as they have, lies in the gift of counterfeit, which they possess more amply than any other people. Their only primitive faculty is an aptitude to reproduce the inventions of foreigners. They would be in history what they are in literature, able translators. The task of the Russians is to translate European civilisation to the Asiatics.

The talent of imitation may become useful and even admirable in nations, provided it late developes itself; but it destroys all the other talents when it precedes them. Russia is a community of copyists! now, every man who can do nothing else but copy necessarily falls into caricature.'

Hesitating for the space of four centuries between Europe and Asia, Russia has not yet succeeded in distinguishing itself by its works in the field of human intellect, because its national characteristics are lost under its borrowed decorations.

Separated from the West by its adherence to the Greek schism, it returns, after many centuries, with the inconsistency of a blind self-love, to demand from nations formed by Catholicism the civilisation of which a religion entirely political has deprived it. This Byzantine religion, which has issued from a palace to maintain order in a camp, does not respond to the most sublime wants of the human soul; it helps the police to deceive the nation, but that is the extent of its power.

It has, in advance, rendered the people unworthy of the culture to which they aspire.

The independence of the church is necessary to the motion of the religious sap; for the development of the noblest faculty of a people, the faculty of believing, depends on the dignity of the man charged with communicating to men the divine revelations. The humiliation of the ministers of religion is the first punishment of heresy; and thus it is that in all schismatic countries the priest is despised by the people, in spite of, or rather because of the protection of the prince. People who understand their liberty

will never obey, from the bottom of their hearts, a dependent clergy.

The time is not far distant when it will be acknowledged that, in matters of religion, what is more essential even than obtaining the liberty of the flock, is the assuring that of the pastor.

The multitude always obey the men whom they take for guides: be they priests, doctors, poets, sages, or tyrants, the minds of the people are in their hands; religious liberty for the mass is therefore a chimera; but it is on this account the more important that the man charged with performing the office of priest for them should be free: now, there is not in the world an independent priest except the Catholic.

Slavish pastors can only guide barren minds: a Greek pope will never do more than instruct a people to prostrate themselves before violent power. Let me not be asked, then, whence it comes that the Russians have no imagination, and how it is that they only copy imperfectly.

When, in the West, the descendants of the barbarians studied the ancients with a veneration that partook of idolatry, they modified them in order to appropriate them. Who can recognise Virgil in Dante, or Homer in Tasso, or Justinian and the Roman laws in the codes of feudalism? The passionate respect then professed for the past, far from stifling genius, aroused it: but it is not thus that the Russians have availed themselves of us.

When a people counterfeit the social forms of another community, without penetrating into the spirit which animates it,—when they seek lessons in civilisation, not from the ancient founders of human

institutions, but from strangers whose riches they envy without respecting their character — when their imitation is hostile, and yet falls into puerile precision — when they borrow from a neighbour whom they affect to disdain, even the very modes of dress and of domestic life, they become a mere echo, a reflection; they exist no longer for themselves.

The society of the middle ages could adore antiquity without being in danger of parodying it; because creative power, when it exists, is never lost, whatever use man may put it to. What a store of imagination is displayed in the erudition of the fifteenth century!

A respect for models is the seal of a creative genius.

Thus it was that the studies of the classics in the West, at the epoch of their revival, scarcely influenced any thing beyond the *belles lettres* and the fine arts: the development of industry, of commerce, of the natural and the exact sciences, is solely the work of modern Europe, which has drawn nearly all the materials of these things out of her own resources. The superstitious admiration which she long professed for pagan literature has not prevented her politics, her religion, her philosophy, her forms of government, her modes of war, her ideas of honour, her manners, her spirit, her social habits from being her own.

Russia alone, more recently civilised, has been deprived by the impatience of her chiefs of an essential fermenting process, and of the benefits of a slow and natural culture.

The internal labour which forms a great people, and renders them fit to rule, has been wanting. The

nation will for ever feel the effects of this absence of a proper life that marked the epoch of their political awakening. Adolescence, that laborious age in which the spirit of man assumes all the responsibility of its independence, was lost to them. Their princes, especially Peter the Great, paying no respect to time, suddenly and forcibly made them pass from a state of infancy to a state of virility. Scarcely yet escaped from a foreign yoke, every thing that was not Mongol seemed to them liberty; and it was thus that, in the joy of their inexperience, they accepted servitude itself as a deliverance, because imposed upon them by their legitimate sovereigns. The people, already debased by slavery, were sufficiently happy, sufficiently independent, if only their tyrant bore a Russian instead of a Tartar name.

The effect of such an illusion still remains: originality of thought has shunned this soil, of which the children, broken in to slavery, have only seriously imbibed, even at the present day, two sentiments, terror and ambition. What is fashion for them, except an elegant chain worn only in public? Russian politeness, however well acted it may be, is more ceremonious than natural; for urbanity is a flower that can blossom only on the summit of the social tree: this plant will not graft; it must strike its own roots, and its stalk, like that of the aloe, is centuries in shooting up. Many generations of semi-barbarians have to die in a land before the upper stratum of the social earth gives birth to men really polite. Many ages, teeming with memories and associations, are essential to the education of a civilised people: the mind of a child born of polished parents can alone ripen fast

enough to understand all the reality that there is in politeness. It is a secret exchange of voluntary sacrifices. Nothing is more delicate, or, it might be said, more truly moral, than the principles which constitute perfect elegance of manners. Such politeness, to resist the trial of the passions, cannot be altogether distinct from that elevation of sentiment which no man acquires by himself alone, for it is more especially upon the soul that the influences of early education operate; in a word, true urbanity is a heritage. Whatever little value the present age may place on time, nature, in its works, places a great deal. Formerly a certain refinement of taste characterised the Russians of the South; and, owing to the relations kept up during the most barbarous ages with Constantinople by the sovereigns of Kiew, a love of the arts reigned in that part of the Slavonian empire; at the same time that the traditions of the East maintained there a sentiment of the great, and perpetuated a certain dexterity among the artists and workmen; but these advantages, fruits of ancient relations with a people advanced in a civilisation inherited from antiquity, were lost during the invasion of the Mongols.

That crisis forced primitive Russia to forget its history. Slavery debases in a manner that excludes true politeness, which is incompatible with any thing servile, for it is the expression of the most elevated and delicate sentiments. It is only when politeness becomes, so to speak, a current coin among an entire people, that such a people can be said to be civilised; the primitive rudeness, the brutal personality of human nature, are then attacked from the

cradle by the lessons which each individual receives in his family: the child of man is not humane; and if he is not at the commencement of life turned from his cruel inclinations, he will never be really polite. Politeness is only the code of pity applied to the every-day affairs of society; this code more especially inculcates pity for the sufferings of self-love: it is also the most universal, the most appropriate, and the most practical remedy that has been hitherto found against egotism.

Whatever pretensions may be made, all these refinements, natural results of the work of time, are unknown to the present Russians, who seem to remember Saraï much better than Constantinople, and who, with a few exceptions, are still nothing better than well-dressed barbarians. They remind me of portraits badly painted, but very finely varnished.

It was Peter the Great, who, with all the imprudence of an untaught genius, all the temerity of a man the more impatient because deemed omnipotent, with all the perseverance of an iron character, sought to snatch from Europe the plants of an already ripened civilisation, instead of resigning himself to the slow progress of sowing the seeds in his own soil. That too highly lauded man produced a merely artificial work: it may be astonishing, but the good done by his barbarous genius was transient, the evil is irreparable.

How does a power to influence the politics of Europe benefit Russia? Factitious interests! vain, foolish passions! Its real interests are to have within itself the principles of life, and to develop them: a nation which possesses nothing within itself but obe-

dience does not live. The nation of which I speak has been posted at the window; it looks out — it listens — it feels like a man witnessing some exhibition. When will this game cease?

Russia ought not only to stop, but to begin anew: is such an effort possible? can so vast an edifice be taken to pieces and reconstructed? The too recent civilisation of the empire; entirely artificial as it is, has already produced real results — results which no human power can annul: it appears to me impossible to controul the future of a people without considering the present. But the present, when it has been violently separated from the past, bodes only evil: to avert that evil from Russia, by obliging it to take into account its ancient history, which was the result only of its primitive character, will be henceforward the ungrateful task, more useful than brilliant, of the men called to govern this land.

The altogether national and highly practical genius of the Emperor Nicholas has perceived the problem: can he resolve it? I do not think so; he does not let enough be done — he trusts too much to himself and too little to others to succeed; for in Russia, the most absolute will is not powerful enough to accomplish good.

It is not against a tyrant, but against tyranny, that the friends of man have here to struggle. There would be injustice in accusing the emperor of the miseries of the empire and the vices of the government: the powers of a man are not equal to the task imposed upon the sovereign who would suddenly seek to reign by humanity over an inhuman people.

He only who has been in Russia, who has seen

close at hand how things are there conducted, can understand how little the man can do, who is reputed capable of doing every thing; and how more especially his power is limited, when it is good that he would accomplish.

The unhappy consequences of the work of Peter I. have been still further aggravated under the great, or rather the long reign of a woman who only governed her people to amuse herself and to astonish Europe — Europe, always Europe! — never Russia!

Peter I. and Catherine II. have given to the world a great and useful lesson, for which Russia has had to pay: they have shown to us that despotism is never so much to be dreaded as when it pretends to do good, for then it thinks the most revolting acts may be excused by the intention; and the evil that is applied as a remedy has no longer any bounds. Crime exposed to view can triumph only for a day; but false virtues for ever lead astray the minds of nations. People, dazzled by the brilliant accessories of crime, by the greatness of certain delinquencies justified by the event, believe at last that there are two kinds of villany, two classes of morals, and that necessity, or reasons of state, as they were formerly called, exculpate criminals of high lineage, provided they have so managed that their excesses should be in accord with the passions of the country.

Avowed, open tyranny would little terrify me after having seen oppression disguised as love of order. The strength of despotism lies in the mask of the despot. When the sovereign can no longer lie, the people are free; thus I see no other evil in this world except that of falsehood. If you dread only violent

and avowed arbitrary power, go to Russia; there you will learn to fear above all things the tyranny of hypocrisy. I cannot deny it; I bring back with me from my journey ideas which I did not own when I undertook it. I therefore would not have been spared for any thing in the world the trouble which it has cost me: if I print the relation of it, I do so precisely because it has modified my opinions upon several points. They are known by all who have read me; my disappointment is not: it is a duty to publish it.

On setting out, I did not intend writing this my last journey: my method is fatiguing, because it consists in reviewing for my friends, during the night, the recollections of the day. Whilst occupied with this labour, which bears the character of confidential communications, the public appeared to my thoughts in only a dim and vapoury distance — so vapoury that I scarcely yet realise its presence; and this will account for the familiar tone of an intimate correspondence being preserved in my printed letters.

I pleased myself with thinking that I should this time be able to travel for myself alone, which would have been a means of observing with tranquillity; but the ideas with which I found the Russians prepossessed with regard to me, from the greatest personages down to the smallest private individuals, gave me to see the measure of my importance, at least of that which I could acquire in Petersburg. "What do you think, or rather, what shall you say of us?" This was at the bottom of every conversation held with me. They drew me from my inaction: I was playing a modest part through apathy, or perhaps cowardice; for Paris renders those humble whom it does not render exces-

sively presumptuous; but the restless self-love of the Russians restored to me my own.

I was sustained in my new resolution by a continual and visible dispersion of illusion. Assuredly the cause of the disappointment must have been strong and active to have allowed disgust to take possession of me in the midst of the most brilliant fêtes that I have ever seen in my life, and in spite of the dazzling hospitality of the Russians. But I recognised at the first glance, that in the demonstrations of interest which they lavish upon us, there is more of the desire to appear engaging, than of true cordiality. Cordiality is unknown to the Russians: it is one of those things which they have not borrowed from their German neighbours. They occupy your every moment; they distract your thoughts; they engross your attention; they tyrannise over you by means of officious politeness; they inquire how you pass your days; they question you with an importunity known only to themselves, and by fête after fête they prevent you seeing their country. They have even coined a French word [*enguirlander* les étrangers] by which to express these falsely polite tactics. Unhappily they have chanced to fall upon a man whom fêtes have always more fatigued than diverted. But when they perceive that their direct attempts upon the mind of a stranger fail, they have recourse to indirect means to discredit his statements among enlightened readers: they can lead him astray with marvellous dexterity. Thus, still to prevent him from seeing things under their true colour, they will falsely depreciate when they can no longer reckon upon his benevolent credulity to permit them falsely to extol.

Often have I, in the same conversation, surprised the same person changing his tactics two or three times towards me. I do not always flatter myself with having discerned the truth, but I have discerned that it was concealed from me, and it is always something to know that we are deceived; if not enlightened, we are then at least armed.

All courts are deficient in life and gaiety; but at that of Petersburg one has not even the permission to be weary. The emperor, whose eye is on every thing, takes the affectation of enjoyment as a homage, which reminds me of the observation of M. de Talleyrand upon Napoleon: "L'Empereur ne plaisante pas; il veut qu'on s'amuse."

I shall wound self-love: my incorruptible honesty will draw upon me reproaches; but is it my fault if, in applying to an absolute government for new arguments against the despot that reigns at home, against disorder baptized with the name of liberty, I have been struck only with the abuses of autocracy, in other words, of tyranny designated good order? Russian despotism is a false order, as our republicanism is a false liberty. I make war with falsehood wherever I discover it; but there is more than one kind of lie: I had forgotten those of absolute power; I now recount them in detail, because in relating my travels I describe without reserve all that I see.

I hate pretexts: I have seen that in Russia, order serves as a pretext for oppression, as in France, liberty does for envy. In a word, I love real liberty — all liberty that is possible in a society from whence elegance is not excluded; I am therefore neither de-

magogue nor despot; I am an aristocrat in the broadest acceptation of the word. The elegance that I wish to preserve in communities is not frivolous, nor yet unfeeling; it is regulated by taste; taste excludes all abuses; it is the surest preservative against them, for it dreads every kind of exaggeration. A certain elegance is essential to the arts, and the arts save the world; for it is through their agency more than any other that people attach themselves to civilisation, of which they are the last and the most precious recompense. By a privilege which belongs to them alone among the various objects that can shed a halo upon a nation, their glory pleases and profits all classes of society equally.

Aristocracy, as I understand it, far from allying itself with tyranny in favour of order, as the demagogues who misunderstand it pretend, cannot exist under an arbitrary government. Its mission is to defend, on one side, the people against the despot, and on the other, civilisation against that most terrible of all tyrants, revolution. Barbarism takes more than one form: crush it in despotism and it springs to life again in anarchy; but true liberty, guarded by a true aristocracy, is neither violent nor inordinate.

Unfortunately, the partisans of a moderating aristocracy in Europe are now blinded, and lend their arms to their adversaries: in their false prudence they seek for aid among the enemies of all political and religious liberty, as though danger could only come from the side of the new revolutionaries; they forget that arbitrary sovereigns were anciently as much usurpers as are the modern jacobins.

Feudal aristocracy has come to an end in all, except

in the indelible glory which will for ever shine around great historical names; but in communities which wish to endure, the noblesse of the middle ages will be replaced, as they long have been among the English, by a hereditary magistracy: this new aristocracy, heir of the old, and composed of many different elements, for office, birth and riches all form its bases, will not regain its credit until it supports itself upon a free religion; and I again repeat, the only free religion, the only one that does not depend on a temporal power, is that taught by the Catholic church: for as to the temporal power of the pope himself, it is now only calculated to defend his sacerdotal independence. Aristocracy is the government of independent minds, and it cannot be too often reiterated, Catholicism is the faith of free priests.

Whenever I think I perceive a truth, I utter it without reference to the consequences, for I am persuaded that evil is not caused by published truths, but by truths that are disguised. Under this persuasion, I have always regarded as pernicious that proverb of our fathers, which says that a truth must not be always spoken.

It is because each one picks and chooses in truth only such parts as serve his passions, his fears, or his interest, that it can be rendered more mischievous than error. When I travel, I do not make selections among the facts which I gather, I do not reject those which oppose my favourite opinions. When I relate, I have no other religion than that of a worship of truth; I do not permit myself to be a judge, I am not even a painter, for painters compose; I endeavour to become a mirror; in short, I wish to be, above all

things, impartial; and for this object the intention suffices, at least in the eyes of intelligent readers, and I cannot and will not recollect that there are others: such discovery would render the labours of the author too fastidious.

Every time that I have had occasion to communicate with men, the first thought with which their manner has inspired me has been that they possess more ability than I, that they know better how to speak, act, and defend themselves. Such have been, up to this day, the results of my experience in the world; I do not therefore despise any one, and, least of all, my readers. This is the reason that I never flatter them.

If there are men towards whom I find it difficult to be equitable, they are those who weary me; but I scarcely know any such, for I always fly from the indolent.

I have said that there is only one town in Russia; there is also only one drawing-room in Petersburg: every where is to be seen either the court or fractions of the court. You may change the house, but you cannot change the circle; and in that invariable circle all subject of interesting conversation is interdicted; but here I find that there is a compensation, thanks to the sharpened wit of the women, who understand wonderfully well how to inspire thoughts without uttering the words that express them.

Women are in every land the least servile of slaves, because, using so skilfully their weakness as to form for themselves a power out of it, they know better than we do how to evade bad laws; it is they, consequently, who are destined to save individual liberty wherever public liberty is wanting.

What is liberty if it be not the guarantee of the rights of the weakest, whom woman is by nature charged with representing in social life? In France they now pride themselves on every thing being decided by the majority: . . . admirable marvel! When I shall see that some regard is shown to the claims of the minority, I too shall cry *Vive la liberté!* It must be owned that the weakest now, were the strongest formerly, and that then they only too often set the example of the abuse of superior force that I complain of. But one error does not excuse another.

Notwithstanding the secret influence of the women, Russia still remains farther from liberty, not in words, but in things, than most of the countries upon earth. To-morrow, in an insurrection, in the midst of massacre, by the light of a conflagration, the cry of freedom may spread to the frontiers of Siberia; a blind and cruel people may murder their masters, may revolt against obscure tyrants, and dye the waters of the Volga with blood; but they will not be any the more free: barbarism is in itself a yoke.

The best means of emancipating men is not pompously to proclaim their enfranchisement, but to render servitude impossible by developing the sentiment of humanity in the heart of nations: that sentiment is deficient in Russia. To talk liberalism to the Russians, of whatever class they may be, would now be a crime; to preach humanity to all classes without exception is a duty.

The Russian nation has not yet imbibed the sentiment of justice; thus, one day it was mentioned to me in praise of the Emperor Nicholas, that an obscure private individual had gained a cause against some

powerful nobleman. In this instance, the encomium on the sovereign appeared to me as a satire upon the community. The too-highly boasted fact proved to me positively that equity is only an exception in Russia.

Every thing duly considered, I would by no means advise obscure men to act in reliance upon the success of the person thus instanced, who was favoured perhaps to assure impunity to the usual course of injustice, and to furnish a specimen of equity which the dispensers of the law were in need of, to serve as a reply to reproaches of servility and corruption.

Another fact, which suggests an inference little favourable to the Russian judiciary, is, that there should be so little litigation in the country. The reason is not obscure; people would more often have recourse to justice if the judges were more equitable. A similar reason accounts for there being no fighting or quarrelling in the streets. A dread of chains and dungeons is the consideration which usually restrains the two parties.

Notwithstanding the melancholy pictures that I draw, two inanimate objects, and one living person, are worth the trouble of the journey. The Neva of Petersburg during the nightless season, the Kremlin of Moscow by moonlight, and the Emperor of Russia: these include picturesque, historical, and political Russia; beyond them, every thing is fatiguing and wearisome to a degree that may be judged of by the preceding chapters.

Many of my friends have already written to advise me not to publish them.

As I was preparing to leave Petersburg, a Russian

asked me, as all the Russians do, what I should say of his country. "I have been too well received there to talk about it*," was my reply.

This avowal, in which I thought I had scarcely politely concealed an epigram, is brought up against me. "Treated as you have been," I am told, "you cannot possibly tell the truth; and as you cannot write except to do so, you had better remain silent." Such is the opinion of a party among those to whom I am accustomed to listen. At any rate, it is not flattering to the Russians.

My opinion is, that without wounding the delicacy, without failing in the gratitude due to individuals, nor yet in the respect due to self, there is always a proper manner of speaking with sincerity of public men and things, and I hope to have discovered this manner. It is pretended that truth only shocks, but in France, at least, no one has the right or the power to close the mouth of him who speaks it. My exclamations of indignation cannot be taken for the disguised expression of wounded vanity. If I had listened only to my self-love it would have told me to be enchanted with every thing: my heart has been enchanted with nothing.

If every thing related of the Russians and their country turn into personalities, so much the worse for them: this is an inevitable evil, for things do not exist in Russia, since it is the whim of a man who makes and unmakes them; but that is not the fault of travellers.

The emperor appears to me little disposed to lay down a part of his authority. Let him suffer, then,

* "J'y ai été trop bien reçu pour en parler."

the responsibility of omnipotence: it is the first expiation of the political lie by which a single individual declares himself absolute master of a country and all powerful sovereign of the thoughts of a people.

Forbearance in practice does not excuse the impiety of such a doctrine. I have found among the Russians that the principles of absolute monarchy, applied with inflexible consistency, lead to results that are monstrous; and, this time, my political quietism cannot withhold me from perceiving and proclaiming that there are governments to which people ought never to submit.

The Emperor Alexander, talking confidentially with Madame de Staël about the ameliorations which he projected, said to her, "You praise my philanthropical intentions—I am obliged to you; nevertheless, in the history of Russia, I am only a lucky chance."

That prince spoke the truth: the Russians vainly boast of the prudence and management of the men who direct their affairs; arbitrary power is not the less the fundamental principle of the state; and this principle so works that the emperor makes, or suffers to be made, or allows to exist, laws (excuse the application of this sacred name to impious decrees) which, for example, permit the sovereign to declare that the legitimate children of a man legally married have no father, no name; in short, that they are ciphers and not men.* And am I to be forbidden to accuse at the bar of Europe a prince who, distinguished and superior as he is, consents to reign without abolishing such a law?

* See the History of the Princess Troubetzkoï, chap. xxi.

His resentment is implacable: with hatred so strong, he may yet be a great sovereign, but he cannot be a great man. The great man is merciful, the political character is vindictive: vengeance reigns, pardon converts.

I have now made my last observations upon a prince that one hesitates to judge, after knowing the country where he is condemned to reign; for men are there so dependent upon things, that it is difficult to know how high or how low to look in fixing the responsibility of things done. And the nobles of such a country pretend to resemble the French! The French kings in barbarous times have often cut off the heads of their great vassals; but those princes, when they destroyed their enemies and seized their goods, did not debase by an insulting decree their caste, their family, and their country: such a forgetfulness of all dignity would have rendered the people of France indignant, even in the middle ages. But the people of Russia suffer even worse things than these. I must correct myself,—there is no people of Russia: there is an emperor, who has serfs, and there are courtiers who have serfs also; but this does not constitute a people.

The middle class, few in number as compared with the others, is at present almost entirely composed of strangers; a few peasants, enfranchised by their wealth, together with the smallest employés, begin to swell its ranks. The future fate of Russia depends upon this new citizen class, the elements of which are so diverse that it seems scarcely possible they can combine together.

The attempt is now making to create a Russian nation; but the task is difficult for one man.

Evil is quickly committed but slowly repaired: the mortifications of despotism must often, I should think, enlighten the despot on the abuses of absolute power. But the embarrassments of the oppressor do not excuse oppression. I can pity them, because evil is always to be pitied; but they inspire me with much less compassion than the sufferings of the oppressed. In Russia, whatever be the appearance of things, violence and arbitrary rule is at the bottom of them all. Tyranny rendered calm by the influence of terror, is the only kind of happiness which this government is able to afford its people.

And when chance has made me a witness of the unspeakable evils endured under a constitution founded on such principles, is the fear of wounding this or that delicate feeling to prevent my describing what I have seen? I should be unworthy of having eyes if I ceded to such pusillanimous partiality, disguised as it has this time been under the name of respect for social propriety, as though my conscience had not the first claim to my respect. What! when I have been allowed to penetrate into a prison, where I have understood the silence of the terrified victims, must I not dare to relate their martyrdom, for fear of being accused of ingratitude, because of the complaisance of the gaolers? Such reserve would be any thing but a virtue. I declare, then, that, after having observed well around me, after endeavouring to see what was attempted to be concealed, to understand what it was not wished I should know, to distinguish between the true and the false in all that was said to me, I do not believe I am exaggerating in affirming, that the empire of Russia is a

country whose inhabitants are the most miserable upon earth, because they suffer at one and the same time the evils of barbarism and of civilisation. As regards myself, I should feel that I was a traitor and a coward if, after having already boldly sketched the picture of a great part of Europe, I could hesitate to complete it, for fear either of modifying certain opinions of my own which I once maintained, or of shocking certain parties by a faithful picture of a country which has never been painted as it really is. On what, pray, should I ground a respect for evil things? Am I bound by any other chain than a love of truth?

In general, the Russians have struck me as being men endowed with great tact; extremely quick, but possessing very little sensibility; highly susceptible, but very unfeeling: this I believe to be their real character. As I have already said, a quick-sighted vanity, a sarcastic finesse are dominant traits in their disposition; and I repeat, that it would be pure silliness to spare the self-love of people who are themselves so little merciful: susceptibility is not delicacy. It is time that these men who discern with so much sagacity the vices and the follies of our society, should accustom themselves to bear with our sincerity. The official silence which is maintained among them deceives them: it enervates their intellect: if they wish to be recognised by the European nations, and treated as equals, they must begin by submitting to hear themselves judged. All the nations have had to undergo this kind of process. When did the Germans refuse to receive the English, except on condition that the latter should speak well

of Germany? Nations have always good reasons for being what they are, and the best of all is that they cannot be otherwise.

This excuse could not indeed be pleaded by the Russians, at least not by those who read. As they ape every thing, they might be otherwise; and it is just the consciousness of this possibility which renders their government gloomy, even to ferocity! That government knows too well that it can be sure of nothing with characters which are mere reflections.

A more powerful motive might have checked my candour — the fear of being accused of apostasy. "He has long protested," it will be said, "against liberal declamations; here behold him ceding to the torrent, and seeking false popularity after having disdained it."

Perhaps I deceive myself; but the more I reflect, the less I believe that this reproach can reach me, or even that it will be addressed to me.

It is not only in the present day that a fear of being blamed by foreigners has occupied the minds of the Russians. That strange people unite an extremely boasting spirit with an excessive distrust of self; self-sufficiency without, uncomfortable humility within, are traits which I have observed in the greater number of Russians. Their vanity, which never rests, is, like English pride, always suffering. They also lack simplicity. Naïveté, that French word of which no other language can render the exact sense, because the thing it describes is peculiar to ourselves, naïveté, that simplicity which can become pointedly witty, that gift of disposition which can produce laughter without ever wounding the heart, that for-

getfulness of oratorical precautions which goes so far as to lend arms against itself to those with whom the individual converses, that fairness of judgment, that altogether involuntary truthfulness of expression, in one word, that Gallic simplicity, is unknown to the Russians. A race of imitators will never be *naïf;* calculation will, with them, always destroy sincerity.

I have found in the will of Monomachus, prudent and curious counsels addressed to his children: the following is a passage which has particularly struck me, and I have therefore taken it as a motto for my book, for it contains an important avowal: "Above all, respect foreigners, of whatever quality, of whatever rank they may be, and if you cannot load them with presents, at least lavish upon them tokens of good will, *for, on the manner in which they are treated in a country depends the good and the evil which they will say of it when they return to their own.*" (From the advice of Vladimir Monomachus to his children, in 1126.)

Such a refinement of self-love, it must be owned, takes from hospitality much of its worth. It is a charity founded on calculation, of which I have, in spite of myself, been more than once reminded during my journey. Men ought not to be deprived of the recompense of their good actions, but it is immoral to make this recompense the *primum mobile* of virtue.

Karamsin himself, from whom the above is cited, speaks of the unfortunate results of the Mongol invasion, in its effect upon the character of the Russian people: if I am found severe in my judgments, it may be seen that they are justified by a grave historian who yet was disposed to be indulgent.

The following is an instance:—

"National pride was lost among the Russians: they had recourse to artifices which supply the want of strength among a people condemned to servile obedience: *skilful in deceiving the Tartars, they became also proficient in the art of mutually deceiving each other. Buying from barbarians their personal security, they became more greedy of money, and less sensitive to wrongs and to shame, while exposed unceasingly to the insolence of foreign tyrants.*"

Further on he says, —

"It may be that the present character of the Russians preserves some of the stains with which the barbarity of the Mongols soiled it."

In giving a *résumé* of the glorious reign of the great and good prince, Ivan III., he says, "*Having at last penetrated the secret of autocracy, he* (Ivan) *became a terrestrial god in the eyes of the Russians, who thenceforward began to astonish all other people by a blind submission to the will of their sovereign.*"

These admissions appear to me as doubly significant, coming from the mouth of a historian as courtier-like and as timid as Karamsin. I might have multiplied the citations, but I believe the above are sufficient to show my right openly to express my views, thus justified by the opinions of an author accused of partiality.

In a country where minds are, from the cradle, fashioned in the dissimulation and finesse of Oriental policy, natural sentiment must be more rare than elsewhere; and, consequently, when it is discovered it has a peculiar charm. I have met in Russia some men who blush to feel themselves oppressed by the

stern system under which they are obliged to live without daring to complain: these men are only free in the face of the enemy; they go to make war in the Caucasus, that they may get rid of the yoke imposed upon them at home. The sorrows of such a life imprint prematurely on their faces a seal of melancholy, which strikingly contrasts with their military habits and the heedlessness of their age: the wrinkles of youth reveal profound griefs, and inspire deep pity. These young men have borrowed from the East their gravity, and from the North their vague imaginative reverie: they are very unhappy and very amiable: no inhabitants of any other land resemble them.

Since the Russians possess grace, they must necessarily have some kind of natural sentiment in their character, though I have not been able to discern it. It is, perhaps, impossible for a stranger travelling through Russia as rapidly as I have done to grasp it. No character is so difficult to define as that of this people.

Without a middle age—without ancient associations—without catholicism—without chivalry to look back upon—without respect for their word.*—always Greeks of the Lower Empire—polished, like the Chinese, by set forms—coarse, or at least indelicate, like the Calmucs—dirty like the Laplanders—beautiful as the angels—ignorant as savages (I except the women and a few diplomatists)—cunning as the Jews—intriguing as freedmen—gentle and grave in their manners as the Orientals—cruel in their sentiments as

* Notwithstanding all that has been already said, it may be proper here to repeat, that this applies only to the mass, who, in Russia, are led solely by fear and force.

barbarians—mockers both by nature and by the feeling of their inferiority—light-minded in appearance only; —the Russians are essentially fit for serious affairs. All have the requisite disposition for acquiring an extraordinarily acute tact, but none are magnanimous enough to rise above finesse; and they have therefore disgusted me with that faculty, so indispensable to those who would live among them. With their continual *surveillance* of self, they seem to me the men the most to be pitied on earth. This police of the imagination is incessantly leading them to sacrifice their sentiments to those of others: it is a negative quality which excludes positive ones of a far superior character; it is the livelihood of ambitious courtiers, whose business is to obey the will and to guess the impulses of another, but who would be scouted should they ever pretend to have an impulse of their own. To give an impulse requires genius; genius is the tact of energy; tact is only the genius of weakness. The Russians are all tact. Genius acts, tact observes; and the abuse of observation leads to mistrust, that is, to inaction; genius may ally itself with a great deal of art, but never with a very refined tact, because tact —that supreme virtue of subalterns who respect the enemy, that is, the master, so long as they dare not strike—is always united with a degree of artifice. Under the influence of this talent of the seraglio, the Russians are impenetrable: it is true that we always see they are concealing something, but we cannot tell what they conceal, and this is sufficient for them. They will be truly formidable and deeply skilful men when they succeed in masking even their finesse.

Some of them have already attained to that profi-

ciency: they are the first men of their country, both by the posts they occupy, and the superiority of their abilities. But, good heavens! what is the object of all this management? What sufficient motive shall we assign for so much stratagem? What duty, what recompence, can so long reconcile the faces of men to bear the fatigue of the mask?

Can the play of so many batteries be destined to defend only a real and legitimate power? Such a power would not need it; truth can defend herself. Is it to protect the miserable interests of vanity? Perhaps it is; yet to take so much pains to attain so contemptible a result would be unworthy of the grave men to whom I allude; I attribute to them profounder views; I think I perceive a greater object, and one which better explains their prodigies of dissimulation and longanimity.

An ambition inordinate and immense, one of those ambitions which could only possibly spring in the bosoms of the oppressed, and could only find nourishment in the miseries of a whole nation, ferments in the heart of the Russian people. That nation, essentially aggressive, greedy under the influence of privation, expiates beforehand, by a debasing submission, the design of exercising a tyranny over other nations: the glory, the riches which it hopes for, consoles it for the disgrace to which it submits. To purify himself from the foul and impious sacrifice of all public and personal liberty, the slave, upon his knees, dreams of the conquest of the world.

It is not the man who is adored in the Emperor Nicholas — it is the ambitious master of a nation more ambitious than himself. The passions of the

Russians are shaped in the same mould as those of the people of antiquity: among them every thing reminds us of the Old Testament; their hopes, their tortures, are great like their empire.

There, nothing has any limits,—neither griefs, nor rewards, nor sacrifices, nor hopes: the power of such a people may become enormous, but they will purchase it at the price which the nations of Asia pay for the stability of their governments—the price of happiness.

Russia sees in Europe a prey which our dissensions will sooner or later yield to it: she foments anarchy among us in the hope of profiting by a corruption which she favours because it is favourable to her views: it is the history of Poland recommencing on a larger scale. For many years past Paris has read revolutionary journals paid by Russia. "Europe," they say at Petersburg, "is following the road that Poland took; she is enervating herself by a vain liberalism, whilst we continue powerful precisely because we are not free: let us be patient under the yoke; others shall some day pay for our shame."

The views that I reveal here may appear chimerical to minds engrossed with other matters; their truth will be recognised by every man initiated in the march of European affairs, and in the secrets of cabinets, during the last twenty years. They furnish a key to many a mystery; they explain also, without another word, the extreme importance which thoughtful men, grave both by character and position, attach to the being viewed by strangers only on the favourable side. If the Russians were, as they pretend, the supporters of order and legitimacy, would they make use of men, and, what is worse, of means which are revolutionary?

The monstrous credit of Russia at Rome is one of the effects of the influence against which I would have us prepared.* Rome and Catholicism have no greater, no more dangerous enemy than the Emperor of Russia. Sooner or later, under the auspices of the Greek autocracy, schism will reign alone at Constantinople; and then the Christian world, divided into two camps, will recognise the wrong done to the Roman church by the political blindness of its head.

That prince, alarmed by the disorder into which the nations were falling on his elevation to the pontifical throne, terrified by the moral evils inflicted upon Europe by our revolutions, without support, alone in the midst of an indifferent or scoffing world, feared nothing so much as the popular commotions from which he had suffered, and seen his contemporaries suffer: ceding, therefore, to the fatal influence of certain narrow minds, he took human prudence for his guide; he became wise according to the fashion of the world, skilful after the manner of men; that is to say, blind and weak in the sight of God: and thus was the cause of Catholicism in Poland deserted by its natural advocate, the visible head of the orthodox church. Are there now many nations who would sacrifice their soldiers for Rome? And yet, when, in his nakedness and poverty, the pope still found a people ready to die for him — he excommunicated them! — he, the only prince on earth who was bound to assist them at the risk of his own life, excommunicated them to please the sovereign of a schismatic nation! The faithful asked each other in dismay, what had become of the indefatigable

* *Written in 1839.*

foresight of the Holy See: the martyrs, smitten with interdiction, saw the Catholic faith sacrificed by Rome to the Greek policy; and Poland, discouraged in her godlike resistance, submitted to her fate without understanding it.*

How is it that the representative of God upon earth has not discovered that, since the treaty of Westphalia, all the wars of Europe are religious wars? What carnal prudence is it that can have so disturbed his vision as to have led him to apply to the direction of heavenly things, means proper enough for earthly monarchs, but unworthy of the king of kings? Their throne has only a transient duration; his shall endure for ever — yes, for ever: for the priest who is seated upon that throne would be more great, more clear-sighted in the catacombs than he is in the Vatican. Cheated by the subtilty of the sons of the age, he has not penetrated below the surface of things; and, in the aberrations into which his fear-policy has led him, he has forgotten to draw his strength from its only real source — the politics of faith.†

* These remonstrances, which, it is believed, do not overstep the bounds of respect, have been justified by the later edicts of the court of Rome.

† Ignorance on religious points is so great in the present day, that a Catholic, a man of talent, to whom I read this passage, interrupted me, saying, "You are no longer a Catholic, you blame the pope!" As if the pope was impeccable, as well as infallible, in matters of faith. Even this infallibility itself is submitted to certain restrictions by the Gallicans, who yet consider themselves Catholic. Has Dante ever been accused of heresy? Yet what is the language that he addresses to such of the popes as he places in his hell? The ablest minds of our times fall into a confusion of ideas that would have excited the

But patience! the times are ripening; soon every question will be clearly defined, and truth, defended by its legitimate champions, will regain its empire over the minds of nations. Perhaps the struggle which is preparing will serve to convince Protestants of an essential truth, which I have already more than once dwelt upon, but on which I insist, because it appears to me the only truth necessary to expedite the reunion of all Christian communities: it is that the only really free priest that exists is the Catholic priest. Everywhere else, except in the Catholic church, the priest is subjected to other laws and other lights than those of his conscience and his doctrine. One trembles on seeing the inconsistencies of the Church of England, as well as the abjectness of the Greek church at Petersburg: when hypocrisy ceases to triumph in England the greater part of the kingdom will again become Catholic. The church of Rome has alone saved the purity of faith by defending throughout the earth, with sublime generosity, with heroic patience, with inflexible conviction, the independence of sacerdotal power against the usurpations of temporal sovereignties. Where is the church which has not allowed itself to be lowered by the different governments of the earth to the rank of a pious police? There is but one, one only — the Catholic church; and that liberty which she has preserved at the cost of the blood of her martyrs, is an

laughter of the schoolboys of past ages. I answered my critic by referring him to Bossuet. His exposition of Catholic doctrine, confirmed, approved, always praised and adopted by the court of Rome, sufficiently justifies my principles.

eternal principle of life and power. The future is her own, because she has kept herself pure from alloy. Let Protestantism agitate and divide,—to do so is the very principle of its nature; let sects quarrel and dispute,—this is their vocation; the Catholic church waits.

The Greco-Russian clergy have never been, and never will be, any thing more than a militia dressed in a uniform rather different from that of the secular troops of the empire.

The distance which separates Russia from the West has wonderfully aided hitherto in veiling all these things from us. If the astute Greek policy so much fears the truth, it is because it so well knows how to profit by falsehood; but what surprises me is that it should succeed in perpetuating the reign of that influence.

Can the reader now understand the importance of an opinion, of a sarcastic word, a letter, a jest, a smile, or, with still greater reason, of a book in the eyes of a government thus favoured by the credulity of its people; and by the complaisance of all foreigners? A word of truth dropped in Russia is a spark that may fall on a barrel of gunpowder.

What do the men who govern the empire care for the want, the pallid visages of the soldiers, of the emperor? Those living spectres have the most beautiful uniforms in Europe; what matters, then, the filthy smocks in which the gilded phantoms are concealed in the interior of their barracks? Provided they are only shabby and dirty in secret, and that they shine when they show themselves, nothing is asked from them, nothing is given them. With the

Russians, appearance is everything, and among them appearance deceives more than it does among others. It follows, that whoever lifts a corner of the curtain loses his reputation in Petersburg beyond the chance of retrieving it.

Social life in that country is a permanent conspiracy against the truth.

There, whoever is not a dupe, is viewed as a traitor, — there, to laugh at a gasconnade, to refute a falsehood, to contradict a political boast, to find a reason for obedience, is to be guilty of an attempt against the safety of the state and the prince; it is to incur the fate of a revolutionist, a conspirator, an enemy of order, a Pole; and we all know whether this fate is a merciful one. It must be owned the SUSCEPTIBILITY which thus manifests itself is more formidable than laughable; the minute *surveillance* of such a government, in accord with the enlightened vanity of such a people, becomes fearful; it is no longer ludicrous.

People must and ought to employ all manner of precautions under a master who shows mercy to no enemy, who despises no resistance, and who considers vengeance as a duty. This man, or rather this government personified, would view pardon as apostacy, clemency as self-forgetfulness, humanity as a want of respect towards its own majesty, or, I should rather say, its divinity!

Russian civilisation is still so near its source that it resembles barbarism. The Russians are nothing more than a conquering community; their strength does not lie in mind, but in war, that is, in stratagem and ferocity.

Poland, by its last insurrection, has retarded the explosion of the mine; it has forced the batteries to remain masked: Poland will never be pardoned for the dissimulation that she has rendered necessary, not towards herself, for she is immolated with impunity, but towards friends whom it is needful to continue making dupes, while managing their stormy philanthropy. The advance-guard of the new Roman Empire, which will be called the Greek Empire, and the most circumspect at the same time that he is the most blind of the kings of Europe*, to please his neighbour, who is also his master, is commencing a religious war. If he can be thus led astray, it will be easy to seduce others.

If ever the Russians succeed in conquering the West, they will not govern it from their own country, after the manner of the old Mongols; on the contrary, there will be nothing in which they will show such eager haste as to issue from their icy plains: unlike their ancient masters, the Tartars, who tyrannised over the Slavonians from a distance — for the climate of Muscovy frightened even the Mongols — the Muscovites will leave their country the moment the roads of other countries are open to them.

At this moment they talk moderation; they protest against the conquest of Constantinople; they say that they fear every thing that would increase an empire where the distances are already a calamity; they dread — yes! even thus far extends their prudence! — they dread hot climates! . . . . Let us wait a little, and we shall see what will become of all these fears.

* Written of the late King of Prussia, in 1839.

And am I not to speak of so much falsehood, so many perils, so great an evil? . . . . No, no; I would rather have been deceived and speak, than have rightly discerned and remain silent. If there is temerity in recounting my observations there would be criminality in concealing them.

The Russians will not answer me; they will say, "A journey of four months! — he cannot have fully seen things."

It is true I have not fully seen, but I have fully devined.

Or, if they do me the honour of refuting me, they will deny facts, — facts which they are accustomed to reckon as nothing in Petersburg, where the past, like the present and the future, is at the mercy of the monarch: for, once again, the Russians have nothing of their own but obedience and imitation; the direction of their mind, their judgment, and their free-will belongs to their master. In Russia, history forms a part of the crown domain: it is the moral estate of the prince, as men and lands are the material; it is placed in cabinets with the other imperial treasures, and only such of it is shown as it is wished should be seen. The emperor modifies at his pleasure the annals of the country, and daily dispenses to his people the historic truths that accord with the fiction of the moment. Thus it was that Minine and Pojarski — heroes forgotten for two centuries — were suddenly exhumed, and became the fashion, during the invasion of Napoleon. At that moment, the government permitted patriotic enthusiasm.

Nevertheless, this exorbitant power injures itself; Russia will not submit to it eternally. A spirit of

revolt broods in the army. I say, with the emperor, the Russians have travelled too much; the nation has become greedy of information: the custom-house cannot confiscate ideas, armies cannot exterminate them, ramparts cannot arrest their progress; ideas are in the air, they pervade every region, and they are changing the world.*

From all that has gone before, it follows that the future — that brilliant future dreamt of by the Russians — does not depend upon them; they have no ideas of their own; and the fate of this nation of imitators will be decided by people whose ideas are their own. If passions calm in the West, if union be established between the governments and their subjects, the greedy hope of the conquering Slavonians will become a chimera.

Is it proper to repeat, that I write without animosity, that I have described things without traducing persons, and that, in expatiating upon certain facts which have shocked me, I have generally accused less than I have recounted?

I left Paris with the opinion, that the intimate alliance of France and Russia could alone set to rights the affairs of Europe; but since I have seen the Russian nation, and have recognised the true spirit of its government, I have felt that it is isolated from the rest of the civilised world by a powerful

* Since this has been written, the emperor has permitted a crowd of Russians to make a stay in Paris. He, perhaps, thinks he may cure the innovators of their dreams, by showing them France, which is represented to him as a volcano of revolutions, as a country, the residence in which must for ever disgust them with political reforms: he deceives himself.

political interest, supported by religious fanaticism; and I am of opinion, that France should seek for allies among nations whose interests accord with her own. Alliances are not to be formed on opinions in opposition to wants. Where, in Europe, are wants which accord? I answer, among the French and the Germans, and the people naturally destined to serve as satellites to those two great nations. The destinies of a progressive civilisation, a civilisation sincere and national, will be decided in the heart of Europe: every thing which tends to hasten the perfect agreement of French and German policy is beneficent; every thing which retards that union, however specious be the motive for delay, is pernicious.

War is going to break out between philosophy and faith, between politics and religion, between Protestantism and Catholicism; and the banner raised by France in this gigantic struggle will decide the fate of the world, of the Church, and above all, of France herself.

The proof that the kind of alliance to which I aspire is good, is that a time will come when we shall not have it in our power to choose any other.

As a foreigner, especially as a foreigner who writes, I was overwhelmed with protestations of politeness by the Russians: but their obliging civilities were limited to promises; no one gave me facilities for seeing into the depths of things. A crowd of mysteries have remained impenetrable to my intellect. A year spent in the journey would have but little aided me; the inconveniences of winter seemed to me the more formidable, because the inhabitants assured me that they were of little consequence. They think nothing of paralysed limbs and frozen faces;

though I could cite more than one instance of accidents of this kind happening even to ladies in the highest circles of society, both foreign and Russian; and once attacked, the individual feels the effects all his life. I had no wish uselessly to brave together these evils, with the tedious precautions that would be necessary to avoid them. Besides, in this empire of profound silence, of vast empty spaces, of naked country, of solitary towns, of prudent physiognomies, whose expression, by no-means sincere, made society itself appear empty, melancholy was gaining hold upon me; I fled before the spleen as much as the cold. Whoever would pass a winter at Petersburg must resign himself for six months to forget nature, in order to live imprisoned among men who have nothing in their characters that is natural.* I admit, ingenuously, I have passed a wretched summer in Russia, because I have not been able well to understand beyond a small portion of what I have seen. I hoped to arrive at solutions; I bring back only problems.

There is one mystery which I more especially regret my inability to penetrate: I allude to the little influence of religion. Notwithstanding the political servitude of the Greek Church, might it not at least preserve some moral authority over the people? It does not possess any. What is the cause of the nothingness of a church whose labours every thing seems to

* I have found, in the newly-published Letters of Lady Montague, a maxim of the Turkish courtiers, applicable to all courtiers, but more especially to the Russian; it will serve to mark the relations, of which more than one sort exist, between Turkey and Muscovy: — "Caress the favoured, shun the unfortunate, and trust nobody."

favour? This is the problem. Is it the property of the Greek religion to remain thus stationary, contenting itself with external marks of respect? Is such a result inevitable whenever the spiritual power falls into absolute dependence upon the temporal? I believe so: but this is what I could have wished to be able to prove by means of facts and documents. However I will, in a few words, give the result of my observations on the relations between the Russian clergy and people.—

I have seen in Russia a Christian church, which no one attacks, which every one, in appearance at least, respects — a church which every thing favours in the exercise of its moral authority; and yet this church has no influence over the heart; it makes no other than hypocritical or superstitious votaries.

In a land where religion is not respected, it is not responsible: but here, where all the influence of absolute power aids the priest in the accomplishment of his work, where doctrine is not attacked either in print or in discourse, where religious practices have, so to speak, become a law of the state, where the customs of the people, which among us oppose faith, serve its cause, the church may be reasonably reproached for its sterility. That church is lifeless; and yet, to judge by what passes in Poland, it can persecute, though it has not the high virtues and talents that might enable it to proselyte: in short, the Russian church, like every thing else in the country, wants that spirit of liberty without which the light of life goes out.

Occidental Europe is not aware of the degree of religious intolerance that enters into Russian policy.

The worship of the United Greeks (the *Uniates*) has been, after long and heavy persecutions, abolished. The following fact will show the danger run in Russia by speaking of the Greek religion, and of its little moral influence.

Some years ago, a man of mind, and highly esteemed by every one in Moscow, noble both by birth and character, but, unfortunately for himself, devoured with a love of truth — a passion dangerous everywhere, but mortally so in Russia, — ventured to print that the Catholic religion is more favourable to the development of mind, and to the progress of arts, than the Russian Byzantine. The life of the Catholic priest, he says in his book, a life altogether supernatural, or which at least ought to be so, is a voluntary and daily sacrifice of the gross inclinations of nature; a sacrifice incessantly renewed on the altar of faith, to prove to the most incredulous that man is not subjected in all things to the tyranny of material laws, and that he may receive from a superior power means of escaping from them: he adds, "By virtue of the changes operated by time, the Catholic religion can no longer employ her virtuality except in doing good:" in fact, he maintained, that Catholicism was wanting to the great destinies of the Slavonian race, because in it alone could, at the same time, be found, sustained enthusiasm, perfect charity and pure discernment; he supported his opinion by a great number of proofs, and endeavoured to show the advantages of an independent, that is an universal religion, over local or politically-limited religions; in short, he professed an opinion which I shall never cease to defend with all my powers.

Even the faults in the character of the Russian women are by this writer attributed to the Greek religion. He pretends that if they are light and frivolous, and do not know how to preserve the authority in their families which it is the duty of a Christian wife and mother to exercise, it is because they have never received real religious instruction.

This book having escaped, I do not know by what miracle or subterfuge, the vigilance of the censorship, set Russia in a blaze. Petersburg, and Moscow the holy city, uttered cries of rage and alarm; in short, the consciences of the faithful were so disturbed, that, from one end of the empire to the other, was demanded the punishment of this imprudent advocate of the mother of the Christian churches, an advocacy which did not save him from being reviled as an innovator: for — and this is not one of the smallest inconsistencies of the human mind, almost always in contradiction with itself in the comedies which it plays upon this world — the motto of all sectarians and schismatics is, that we should respect the religion under which we are born — a truth too much forgotten by Luther and Calvin; —— in fine, the knout, Siberia, the mines, the galleys, the fortresses of all the Russias, were not enough to reassure Moscow and her Byzantine orthodoxy against the ambition of Rome, aided by the impious doctrine of a traitor to his God and country.

The sentence which was to decide the fate of so great a criminal was expected with the deepest anxiety; it was long in appearing, and the people began to doubt in supreme justice: at last, the emperor, in his unfeeling mercy, declared that there was no ground for punishment, that there was no criminal to make

an example of, but that there was a madman to shut up; and he added that the diseased man should be placed under medical care.

This judgment was put in execution without delay, and in so severe a manner that the reputed madman thought he should have justified the derisive decree of the absolute head of church and state. The martyr of truth had very nearly lost the reason that was *denied* him. At present, *after a three years'* treatment, as degrading as it was rigorous and cruel, the unhappy theologian first begins to enjoy a little liberty: but is it not a miracle! . . . he now doubts his own reason, and, upon the faith of the imperial word, he owns himself insane! O! ye depths of human misery! . . . . In Russia, the word of the sovereign, when it reproves a man, equals the papal excommunication of the middle ages!

The pretended madman may now communicate with a few friends. It was proposed, during my stay in Moscow, to take me to see him in his retreat, but mingled fear and pity withheld me; for my curiosity would have appeared to him insulting. I did not learn what was the punishment of the censors of his book.

This is a quite recent example of the mode of treating affairs of conscience in Russia. I ask again, for the last time, if the traveller so fortunate or unfortunate as to have learnt such facts, has the right to let them remain unknown? In things of this kind, what we positively know enlightens us with regard to what we surmise; and from all these things together there results a conviction which we feel under an obligation of communicating to the world if we are able.

I speak without personal hatred, but also without

fear or restriction; for I brave the danger even of wearying.

The country that I have just surveyed is as sombre and monotonous as that which I described formerly is brilliant and varied. To draw its exact picture is to renounce the hope to please. In Russia, life is as gloomy as in Andalusia it is gay; the Russians are as dull as the Spaniards are full of spirits. In Spain, the absence of political liberty is compensated by a personal independence which perhaps exists nowhere to the same extent, and the effects of which are surprising; whilst in Russia, the one is as little known as the other. A Spaniard lives on love, a Russian lives on calculation; a Spaniard relates every thing, and if he has nothing to relate, he invents; a Russian conceals every thing, or if he has nothing to conceal, he is still silent, that he may appear discreet: Spain is infested with brigands, but they rob only on the road; the Russian roads are safe, but you will be plundered infallibly in the houses: Spain is full of the ruins and the memories of every century; Russia looks back only upon yesterday, her history is rich in nothing but promises: Spain is studded with mountains, whose forms vary at every step taken by the traveller; Russia is but a single unchanging scene, extending from one end of a plain to the other: the sun illumines Seville, and vivifies the whole peninsula; the mists veil the distances in Petersburg, which remain dim during even the finest summer evenings. In short, the two countries are the very opposite of each other; they differ as do day and night, fire and ice, north and south.

He must have sojourned in that solitude without

repose, that prison without leisure which is called Russia, to feel all the liberty enjoyed in the other European countries, whatever form of government they may have adopted. It cannot be too emphatically repeated: liberty is wanted in every thing Russian; unless it be in the commerce of Odessa. The emperor, who is endowed with prophetic tact, little loves the spirit of independence that pervades that city, the prosperity of which is due to the intelligence and integrity of a Frenchman *: it is, however, the only point in his vast dominions where men may with sincerity bless his reign.

If ever your sons should be discontented with France, try my receipt; tell them to go to Russia. It is a useful journey for every foreigner: whoever has well examined that country will be content to live anywhere else. It is always well to know that a society exists where no happiness is possible, because, by a law of his nature, man cannot be happy unless he is free.

Such a recollection renders the traveller less fastidious; and, returning to his own hearth, he can say of his country what a man of mind once said of himself: "When I estimate myself, I am modest; but when I compare myself, I am proud."

* The Duke de Richelieu, minister of Louis XVIII.

APPENDIX.

November, 1842.

DURING the course of this year, chance has brought me into the company of two individuals who served in our armies during the campaign of 1812, and who both lived in Russia for some years after having been made prisoners there. The one is a Frenchman, now professor of the Russian language at Paris; his name is M. Girard; the other is an Italian, M. Grassini, brother of the celebrated singer whose beauty once caused great sensation in Europe, and whose admirable dramatic and musical talents have contributed to the glory of the modern Italian school.

These two individuals have recounted to me facts which, singularly agreeing as they do, although the parties have not the slightest knowledge of each other even by name, have appeared to me sufficiently interesting to merit publication.

The following is the summary of M. Girard's relation.

He was made prisoner during the retreat, and immediately sent, with 3000 other Frenchmen, under charge of a body of Cossacks, into the interior of the empire, where the prisoners were dispersed among the different governments.

The cold became daily more intense. Dying of hunger and fatigue, the unfortunate men were often obliged to stop on the road, until numerous and violent blows had done the office of food for them, and inspired them with strength to march on until they fell dead. At every stoppage, some of these scarcely clad and famished beings were left upon the snow. When they once fell, the frost glued them to earth, and they never rose again. Even their ferocious guards were horrified at their excess of suffering.

Devoured by vermin, consumed by fever and want, carrying everywhere with them contagion, they became objects of terror to the villagers, among whose abodes they were made to stop. They advanced, by dint of blows, towards the places destined

for their taking rest; and it was still with blows that they were received there, without being suffered to approach persons, or even to enter houses. Some were seen reduced to such a state, that, in their furious despair, they fell upon each other with stones, logs of wood and their own hands; and those who came alive out of the conflict devoured the limbs of the dead!!! To these horrible excesses did the inhumanity of the Russians drive our countrymen.

It has not been forgotten that at the very same time, Germany gave a different example to the Christian world. The Protestants of Frankfort still remember the devoted charity of the Bishop of Mayence, and the Italian Catholics recollect with gratitude the succour they received among the Protestants of Saxony.

At night, in the bivouacs, the men who felt themselves about to die rose in terror to struggle, standing, against the death agony; surprised whilst in its contortions by the frost, they remained supported against the walls, stiff and frozen. The last sweat turned to ice over their emaciated limbs; and they were found in the morning, their eyes open, and their bodies fixed and congealed in convulsive attitudes, from which they were snatched only to be burnt. The foot then came away from the ancle more easily than it is, when living, lifted from the soil. When daylight appeared, their comrades, on raising their heads, beheld themselves under the guard of a circle of yet scarcely lifeless statues, who appeared posted round the camp like sentinels of another world. The horror of these awakings cannot be described.

Every morning, before the departure of the column, the Russians burnt the dead; and — shall I say it — they sometimes burnt the dying!

All this M. Girard has seen; these are the sufferings he has shared, and, favoured by youth, survived. Frightful as the facts are, they do not appear to me more so than a multitude of other recitals attested by historians: but what I consider as inexplicable, and almost incredible, is the silence of a Frenchman escaped from this inhuman land, and again in his own country.

M. Girard would never publish the account of his sufferings, through respect, he says, for the memory of the Emperor Alexander, who retained him nearly ten years in Russia, and employed him as French master in the Imperial schools. How

many arbitrary acts, how many frauds, has he not witnessed in those vast establishments! Nothing, however, has been able to induce him to break silence, and to proclaim to Europe these glaring abuses.

Before permitting him to return to France, the Emperor Alexander met him one day during a visit to some provincial college. After addressing to him some gracious words on his long expressed desire to quit Russia, he at last gave him the permission, with even some money for the journey. M. Girard has a gentle countenance, which no doubt pleased the emperor. The unhappy prisoner, who had previously escaped death by a miracle, thus ended his ten years' captivity. He quitted the country of his tormentors and gaolers, loudly repeating the praises of the Russians, and protesting his gratitude for the *hospitality* he had received from them.

"You have not published any thing?" I said to him, after having attentively listened to his narration.

"It was my intention to have related all that I witnessed," he answered; "but, not being known, I should have found neither publisher nor readers."

"Truth will always eventually make its own way," I replied.

"I do not like to say anything against that country," continued M. Girard, "the Emperor was so kind to me."

"Yes; but remember it is very easy to appear kind in Russia."

"On giving me my passport, they recommended to me discretion."

Such is the influence of a ten years' residence in that country upon the mind of a man born in France, brave, and true-hearted. After such an instance, it is easy to conceive what the moral sentiment must be which is transmitted among the native Russians from generation to generation.

In the month of February, 1842, I was at Milan, where I met M. Grassini, who informed me that in 1812, while serving in the army of the Viceroy of Italy, he had been made prisoner during the retreat, in the neighbourhood of Smolensk. He afterwards passed two years in the interior of Russia. The following is our dialogue. I copy it with scrupulous exactness, for I took notes of it the same day.

"You must," I said, "have greatly suffered in that country from the inhumanity of the inhabitants, and the rigour of the climate?"

"From the cold I did," he replied; "but I cannot say that the Russians want humanity. We received in the interior of the country unhoped-for succours. The female peasants, and the ladies, sent us clothes to protect us from the cold, medicines to cure our sick, food, and even linen; nay, some of them braved the risk of contagion by coming to nurse us in our bivouacs, for our miseries had spread frightful maladies among us. To induce any one to approach us, there was required not merely a sentiment of common compassion, but a high courage, a lofty virtue; and I call this humanity."

"I do not pretend to say that there are no exceptions to the general hardness of heart which I observed in Russia. Wherever there is woman, there is pity; the women of all countries sometimes become heroic in compassion: but it is not the less true that in Russia, the laws, the manners, the habits, the characters are impressed with a spirit of cruelty, from which our unhappy prisoners suffered too greatly to allow of our saying much about the humanity of the inhabitants of that country."

"I suffered among them like the others, and more than many others, for since returning to my own country I have continued nearly blind. For thirty years I have had recourse, without success, to every means of art, but my sight is almost lost: the influence of the night dews in Russia, even during the fine season, is pernicious to those who sleep in the open air."

"You slept, then, beneath the open heavens?"

"It was necessary during the military marches imposed upon us."

"Thus, during frosts of twenty or thirty degrees, you were without shelter?"

"Yes: but it is the inhumanity of the climate, not of the men, that must be accused of our sufferings during these unavoidable halts."

"Did the men never add their unnecessary severities to those of nature?"

"It is true I have witnessed acts of ferocity worthy of savages; but I banished the thoughts of these horrors by my love of life: I said to myself, if I indulge in any expressions of indignation,

my keepers will kill me to avenge the honour of their country. Human self-love is so inconsistent, that men are capable of assassinating a fellow-being to prove to others that they are not inhuman."

"You are perfectly right: but all that you tell me by no means causes me to change my opinion respecting the character of the Russians."

"They obliged us to travel in companies. We slept near the villages, the entrance of which was refused us on account of the hospital fever that followed us. In the evening, we stretched ourselves on the ground, wrapped in our cloaks, between two large fires. In the morning, before recommencing our march, our guard counted the dead, and, instead of burying them, which would have cost too much time and trouble, on account of the hardness and depth of the ice and snow, they burnt them, thinking thus to stop the contagion; body and clothes were burnt together: but, will you believe it? more than once, men still alive were thrown into the flames! Reanimated by pain, these wretched creatures concluded their lives with the screams and agonies of the stake!"

"What horrors!"

"Many other atrocities were committed. Every night the rigour of the frost decimated our companies. Whenever any deserted dwelling could be found near the entrance of the towns, they obliged us to lodge there; but not being able to make fires except in certain parts of these buildings, the nights we passed there were no better than those passed in the open air with fires all around us. Many of our people consequently died in the rooms, for want of means to warm themselves."

"But why did they make you journey during the winter?"

"We might have communicated disease to the neighbourhood of Moscow. I have often seen the Russian soldiers dragging the dead, by cords fastened round their ancles, down from the second story of the edifices in which we were herded. Their heads followed, striking and resounding against every step, from the top of the house to the bottom. 'It is of no consequence,' they said, 'they are dead.'"

"And you consider that humane?"

"I only tell you what I have seen: sometimes even worse things happened; for I have seen an end made of the living by

this treatment; the blood of their wounded heads, left upon the stairs, has furnished hideous proofs of the ferocity of the Russian soldiers: I ought to observe also, that sometimes an officer was present at these brutal executions. Such things I and my companions saw daily without making any protest; so greatly does misery brutalise men! It will be my fate to-morrow, I thought; and this community of danger put my conscience at rest, and favoured my inertia."

"It appears to me still to continue, since you could be witness of all these facts, and remain silent for twenty-eight years."

"I employed the two years of my captivity in carefully writing my memoirs. I completed two volumes of the most curious and extraordinary facts that have ever been printed on the subject; I described the arbitrary system of which we were the victims; the cruelty of the tyrannical noblemen who aggravated our miseries, and who surpassed in brutality the common people; and the consolations and relief we received from benevolent noblemen; I showed chance and caprice disposing of the lives of prisoners as well as of natives; in short, I said everything."

"Well?"

"Well! I burnt my narrative before passing the Russian frontier, when I was permitted to return to Italy."

"It was a crime to do so!".

"I was searched: had my papers been seized, I should have been condemned to the knout, and sent to finish my life in Siberia, where my misfortune would have no better served the cause of humanity than my silence serves it here."

"I cannot forgive you for this resignation."

"You forget that it has saved my life, and that my dying would have done good to nobody."

"But you might, since your return, have again written out your narrative."

"I could not have done it with the same exactitude: I no longer believe in my own recollections."

"Where did you pass your two years of captivity?"

"As soon as I reached a town where there was a superior officer, I asked permission to serve in the Russian army; this was to avoid the journey to Siberia. My request was noticed;

and, after some delay, I was sent to Toula, where I obtained the situation of tutor in the family of the governor. I passed two years under his roof."

"How did you live during that time?"

"My pupil was a boy of twelve years, whom I loved, and who also became very fond of me. He told me that his father was a widower, and that he had bought, at Moscow, a female peasant, whom he had made his concubine; and that this woman rendered their household very uncomfortable."

"What kind of man was this governor?"

"A tyrant of the melo-dramatic order. He made dignity consist in silence. During the two years that I dined at his table we never once talked together. He had a blind man for a fool, whom he caused to sing during the whole repast, and encouraged to talk before me against the French, the army, and the prisoners. I knew enough Russian to understand some of these brutal and indecent jests, of which my pupil explained to me the rest when we returned to our chamber."

"What a want of delicacy!—and yet they praise Russian hospitality. You just spoke of cruel noblemen who aggravated the fate of the prisoners: did you fall in with any?"

"Before reaching Toula, I made one of a small party of prisoners confided to a serjeant, an old soldier, who behaved well to us. One evening we halted on the domains of a baron dreaded all around for his cruelty. This ruffian wished to kill us with his own hand; and the serjeant had difficulty in defending our lives against the patriotic rage of the old boyard."

"These men are, indeed, sons of the servants of Ivan IV.! Am I wrong in exclaiming against their inhumanity? Did the father of your pupil give you much money?"

"When I arrived under his roof, I was stript of everything: to clothe me, he generously ordered his tailor to return one of his old coats: he was not ashamed to dress the preceptor of his son in a garment which an Italian lacquey would not have put on."

"And yet the Russians are said to be munificent."

"Yes; but they are shabby in the extreme in their private family arrangements. An Englishman once came to Toula, on which occasion everything was turned upside-down in the

houses he was to visit; people were busy with their dresses, rooms were scoured, wax-lights substituted for the candles; in short, all the habits of life were changed."

"Everything that you tell me only too well justifies my opinion: I see, sir, that, at the bottom, you think as I do; we only differ in language."

"It must be confessed that a man becomes very indifferent after having passed two years of his life in Russia."

"Yes, you give me a proof of it. Is this disposition general?"

"Nearly so: one feels that tyranny is more powerful than words, and that publicity can do nothing against such facts."

"It must still have some efficacy, or the Russians would not so greatly dread it. It is your culpable inertia—permit me to say so—and that of persons who think as you do, which perpetuates the blindness of Europe and the world, and leaves the field free for oppression."

"It would be so in spite of all our books and all our exclamations. To show you that I am not alone in my opinion, I will relate to you the story of one of my companions in misfortune: he was a Frenchman. One evening, this young man reached the bivouac indisposed; he fell into a lethargy during the night, and was dragged in the morning to the pile with the other corpses. The soldiers left him for a moment to fetch some more dead, so as to place them all on the fire together. He had been thrown, clothed as he was, upon his back, his face turned towards the sky; while thus lying, he breathed, and even understood what passed around him, for consciousness had returned, but he still could not give any signs of life. A young woman, struck with the beautiful features and the touching expression of the supposed dead man's face, approached him, and discovered that he yet lived; she sought help, had him removed, nursed and finally restored the stranger. He returned to France several years after his captivity; but he also has not written his memoirs."

"But you, sir, an educated and independent man—why do not you write yours? Facts of this character, well vouched, would have interested the whole world."

"I doubt it: the world is composed of men so occupied with themselves, that the sufferings of unknown parties little move them. Besides, I have a family, and a situation; I depend upon

my government, which is in good understanding with the Russian government, and which would not be pleased to see its subjects publish facts that are sought to be concealed in the country where they take place."

"I am persuaded, sir, that you calumniate your government: you alone — excuse me for saying so — are to blame for your excess of prudence."

"Perhaps so: but I shall never state in print that the Russians are inhuman."

"I consider myself very fortunate to have remained in Russia only a few months; for I observe that the most candid, the most independent minds, after passing several years in that singular country, believe, all the rest of their life, that they still remain, or that they are still liable to return there. And this explains our ignorance of everything that passes in the country. The real character of the men who inhabit the interior of that immense and tremendous empire is an enigma to most Europeans. If other travellers, under whatever motives, choose, like you, to withhold the disagreeable truths that may be addressed to the Russian people and government, this is no reason why Europe should never know what passes in their model prison. To praise the gentleness of despotism, when even beyond its clutches, is a degree of prudence which I view as criminal. The motives of such prudence are inexplicable mysteries: but if I have not penetrated them, I have, at least, escaped the fascination of fear; and this I shall prove by the sincerity of my narrations."

GENEALOGY OF THE ROMANOFF FAMILY SINCE ITS ACCESSION TO THE THRONE.

1. MICHAEL ROMANOFF, died 1645.

2. ALEXIS, d. 1676. = Natalia Narischkin.

3. FEDOR III. died childless, 1682.

4. IVAN V. d. 1696.

Sophia, d. in a nunnery, 1704.

Eudoxia Lapuchin, d. 1731. = 5. PETER THE GREAT, d. 1725. = 6. CATHERINE I. d. 1727.

Catherine, m. to a Prince of Mecklenburg.

Elizabeth, m. to Antony Ulrich of Brunswick, d. in exile.

8. ANNE, Duchess of Courland, d. childless, 1740.

Alexis, m. a Princess of Brunswick, condemned to death by his father, 1718.

Anne, m. Frederick of Holstein Gottorp, d. 1726.

10. ELIZABETH, d. childless, 1761.

7. PETER II. d. childless.

11. PETER III. murdered 1762. = 12. CATHERINE THE GREAT, d. 1796.

9. IVAN VI. dethroned and imprisoned at Schlusselburg, d. 1764, aged 22.

Catherine, d. 1807, aged 65.

Elizabeth, d. 1782, aged 39.

Peter, d. 1798, aged 53.

Alexis, d. 1787, aged 41.

13. PAUL, murdered 1801. = Mary of Wurtemburg.

14. ALEXANDER, d. 1825.

Constantine.

15. NICHOLAS I.

Michael.

N. B. With the death of these five princes and princesses (of whom the four last were freed from captivity in Russia, and sent into Denmark by Catherine II.) ends the line of Ivan V., the senior branch of the Romanoff family.

N. B. The princes who reigned between Ivan IV. and Michael Romanoff were Fedor, or Theodore I., Boris Godounof, Fedor II., Demetrius V., and Basil V.


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